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Justin Trudeau feels the love at Vancouver City Hall metroNEWS

Mayor Gregor Robertson welcomes Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as he arrives at city hall Thursday.

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'Most hated man in America' arrested for fraud. **Business**

WILDLIFE BABY ORCA MAKES EIGHT A baby orca swims alongside an adult whale in the Haro Strait between San Juan Islands, Wash., and Vancouver Island on Wednesday. The new baby is the eighth born since last December to the small, endangered population of killer whales that spend time in the inland waters of Washington state. Decades ago, there were more than 140 southern resident killer whales. That number declined to a low of 71 in the 1970s when dozens of the mammals were captured to be displayed at marine parks and aquariums across the United States.

DAVE ELLIFRIT/THE CENTER FOR WHALE RESEARCH VIA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

B.C. Liberal boss calls it a day

POLITICS

Miller resigns after being charged in gas plants scandal

Matt Kieltyka
Metro | Vancouver

The executive director of the B.C. Liberal Party resigned Thursday after being criminally charged in connection to an Ontario government gas plant scandal.

Laura Miller, 36, is facing charges of breach of trust, mischief in relation to data, and misuse of computer system to commit the offence of mischief in connection with the deletion of government documents, according to Ontario Provincial Police.

Miller was deputy chief to former Ontario premier Dalton McGuinty before being hired by Premier Christy Clark's BC Liberal Party.

McGuinty's former chief of staff, David Livingston, has also been charged.

The charges follow a lengthy OPP investigation into the destruction of thousands of emails on the Liberals' decision to cancel two gas plants prior to the 2011 election, which the auditor general found will cost ratepayers up to $1.1 billion.

Documents released during the police investigation last February showed Livingston and Miller compiled a list of senior Liberal staffers in the then-premier's office whose computers would be purged.

They hired Miller's partner, Peter Faist, to wipe clean dozens of the hard drives on a weekend.

The OPP said the force will not comment further on the evidence "in order to protect the integrity of the investigation and the ensuing court process."

Following the charges, Miller took to Twitter to announce that she's stepping down from the BC Liberal Party as she prepares "to vigorously defend myself back in Ontario."

> **She has stepped down ... to focus on clearing her name.**
> B.C. Premier Christy Clark

In a written statement, Miller alleged misconduct on the part of the investing officers, saying they "misrepresented my actions" and that her subsequent complaint to the Ontario Independent Police Review Director "created a clear bias by the OPP against me."

"After formally complaining about the conduct of the OPP in the way they acted during their investigation into document retention, I find myself being charged," Miller wrote.

Livingston and Miller are scheduled to make their first court appearances in Toronto on Jan. 27, 2016.

Clark released a statement Thursday saying Miller is "known to her colleagues as a person of integrity" in B.C.

"She has stepped down as executive director to focus on clearing her name," Clark said. "It's important to respect the process now that unproven allegations are before the courts in Ontario in relation to matter that happened there three years ago."

The news comes at a time when the BC Liberals are embroiled in their own "triple delete" email scandal.

In October, Information and Privacy Commissioner Elizabeth Denham found political staff in the Premier's Office and ministries of transportation and advance education engaged in the practice of triple deleting emails and failing to document their work to subvert Freedom of Information requests.

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Mayor Gregor Robertson welcomes Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Thursday, the first time a sitting prime minister visited Vancouver City Hall since 1973. JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO

Trudeaumania touches down

POLITICS

Cheering fans welcome prime minister to Vancouver

Emily Jackson
Metro | Vancouver

A bear hug from the mayor and a sea of umbrellas held by cheering fans greeted Prime Minister Justin Trudeau when his black sedan pulled up to Vancouver City Hall on Thursday, the first time a sitting prime minister has visited Vancouver's municipal headquarters since the Liberal leader's father, Pierre Trudeau, stopped by in 1973.

More than 300 people waited an hour in the snow and rain for a glimpse of the new prime minister, who staged the event — a meeting with Mayor Gregor Robertson and a news conference — with no clear purpose other than to ostensibly signal his government is on the same page as Vancouver's.

The mayor, who held an umbrella to shield Trudeau from the elements as he paused for a few selfies, praised the new prime minister for paying attention to cities.

Comments from both politicians marked a complete change in tone from Vancouver's relationship with the previous Conservative government.

"It's so refreshing to have a partner in Ottawa that treats cities with respect and recognizes we are so vital to the country's success," Robertson said, pointing to the reopening of the Kitsilano Coast Guard base as a sign of that respect.

"His priorities are the priorities of the people here in Vancouver."

Trudeau and Robertson met for half an hour after squeezing through a crowded city hall, where hundreds of city employees crowded onto the second-floor balconies to snap pictures as Trudeau greeted the Squamish, Musqueam and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations chiefs and a line of city officials.

Robertson characterized it as "productive" and said they talked transit, affordable housing and cultural investments such as the Vancouver Art Gallery.

The art gallery wants $100 million from the feds to help it build a new gallery. There's no word on if or when that will happen.

"It really, for me, is touching to be here and touching to be surrounded by so many friends," Trudeau said, calling Vancouver his second home before answering a round of media questions where he largely repeated his general policies.

When it comes to Vancouver's regulation of medical-marijuana dispensaries, Trudeau said the Liberal government pledged to change the Criminal Code, but distribution will be up to the province and municipalities. He did not say whether he supports selling marijuana at liquor stores.

Trudeau did not have specific promises for housing or transit, stating Ottawa won't dictate projects but will be a partner to cities across the country.

He didn't reveal the amount or timing of transit funding for the Broadway Subway or Surrey LRTs, either, but said the minister of infrastructure will work with municipalities to advance the projects they want "as quickly as possible."

Nor would he categorically state whether Enbridge's Northern Gateway Pipeline will go forward.

He said the Great Bear Rainforest is "no place for an oil pipeline" but that the government needs to "continue to allow processes to go underway where proponents of a broad range of projects can attempt to acquire the social licence that simply was not available over the past years."

Trudeau may have been light on details, but the mayor praised his government and said the city is excited to work with him.

> **It really, for me, is touching to be here and touching to be surrounded by so many friends.**
> Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who also called Vancouver his second home

> **It's so refreshing to have a partner in Ottawa that treats cities with respect and recognizes we are so vital to the country's success.**
> Gregor Robertson

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ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

B.C.'s annual drinking rate on the rise

It seems British Columbians love their brew.

The province saw the largest annual jump in alcohol consumption in more than a decade — an additional 15 bottles of beer per person per year — according to new data coming out of the University of Victoria's Centre for Addictions Research (CARBC). The average British Columbian now drinks the equivalent of either 100 bottles of wine or 528 bottles of beer on an annual basis.

Tim Stockwell, director of the research centre, credits the sharp rise to the "relaxing" of B.C.'s liquor laws in 2014, including the introduction of happy hour.

"Also the fact that alcohol can now be consumed in more places than before, in more private outlets. There's the model for grocery stores that's being tried out, ski slopes can expand their licensed areas all year long now," he said.

These "small changes," Stockwell said, can be deadly. In 2013, the research centre estimated there were close to 24,500 hospital admissions and nearly 1,300 deaths attributed to alcohol-related causes. The 2.9 per cent spike in alcohol consumption in 2014/15 means there will be an additional 31 deaths and 655 hospital visits.

"One thing for people to bear in mind is what our government does on liquor policy affects the health and safety of the whole community," Stockwell added.

When breaking down the numbers by health authority, Fraser Health had the lowest consumption, followed by Vancouver Coastal, Northern, Vancouver Island and the Interior.

According to Statistics Canada, alcohol consumption across the country has been on the decline over the years, but B.C.'s drinking rate has ranked higher than the national average for more than a decade. TEREZA VERENCA/METRO

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RCMP investigate a shooting at a banquet hall in Richmond in January 2013. The city is consulting with the public on whether to replace the existing RCMP with its own police force.
DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Richmond residents to get their say

POLICING

Mayor asking public if they want to replace existing RCMP

Neil Hall
For Metro

The citizens of Richmond will get a chance to offer their views starting Jan. 11 on whether the city should start its own police force to replace the existing RCMP.

"I really want to get a sense of what people want," Richmond Mayor Malcolm Brodie said Thursday.

"In my informal discussions with people, there's been a range of opinions," he said, adding city officials are keeping an open mind.

Brodie said that while the city is relatively safe and well-served by the RCMP, Richmond was unhappy about being forced to sign the last 20-year RCMP contract in 2012 without a number of concerns being addressed.

One of those concerns was the B.C. RCMP headquarters being relocated from Vancouver to Surrey without any municipal consultation, he said.

There were concerns about the lack of openness, transparency and accountability with the process, so Richmond decided to review its police services, Brodie said.

A report released Nov. 26 gave two options: keep the RCMP or start a Richmond police force, with a police board chaired by the mayor and six others.

The report stated there would be a one-time $19.6-million transition cost if Richmond chose to start its own force by 2018, plus an extra annual cost ranging from $2.2 million to $3.9 million for the existing number of officers (200).

B.C. has the largest deployment of RCMP officers in the country. The province signed a 20-year contract with RCMP, along with five other provinces and three territories, in 2012.

FEEDBACK

The public consultation will continue until Feb. 29. Residents can access a discussion guide and a feedback survey online at letstalkrichmond.ca.

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PM198	2015 MINI Countyrman S	Jungle Green	3,474	$39,890	$38,390
PM290	2015 MINI Countryman S	Midnight Grey	3,940	$40,640	$38,639
QM102	2015 MINI Countryman S	Crystal Silver	3,027	$40,640	$39,140
QM014	2015 MINI Countryman S	Jungle Green	3,405	$41,930	$39,930
QM008	2015 MINI Countryman S	Light White	5,500	$42,299	$40,300

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QM160A	2014 MINI Cooper S	Volcanic Orange	14,069	$29,690	$28,000
QMU030	2014 MINI Cooper S	Midnight Black	12,622	$32,490	$31,000
QMU038	2014 MINI Cooper S	Thunder Grey	28,189	$35,688	$31,190
QMU060	2012 MINI Cooper Coupe	Eclipse Grey	14,251	$22,685	$20,500
QMU056	2014 MINI Cooper Coupe JCW	Pepper White	7,454	$43,000	$36,000
QM217A	2012 MINI Countryman	Pure Red	36,370	$21,685	$20,000
QMU044	2014 MINI Countryman	Light White	13,332	$30,688	$29,690
QMU028	2012 MINI Countryman S	Light White	37,560	$24,995	$23,995
QMU048	2012 MINI Countryman S	Light White	48,624	$28,885	$27,100
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ENVIRONMENT

B.C. First Nation votes down LNG plant

Environmental concerns appear to have dashed plans for a liquefied-natural-gas project on the land of a pro-development First Nation near Vancouver, says the chief.

Of the 139 members of the Tsawwassen First Nation who voted Wednesday, 53 per cent opposed plans that would have seen three- to five-million tonnes of LNG processed annually on the First Nations' territory.

Chief Bryce Williams encouraged members last month to support the plans, saying potential benefits outweighed the limited drawbacks.

Williams said Thursday members were concerned about the environmental impacts of the project and natural-gas extraction and he was proud of how they handled the consultation process.

"Throughout the whole process, I was somewhat on the fence and leaving the decision up to the members," he said.

"I think that was the best choice and the best approach to take. And of course they have spoken, and I support any decision they have made."

Had the band approved the plans, the export facility would have opened as early as 2022, receiving five to six tankers every month.

The project would have brought money to the community, but it wouldn't have offered as many jobs as projects such as a warehouse, said Tom McCarthy, chief administrative officer of the Tsawwassen First Nation Economic Development Corporation.

"With all the opportunities that are provided to us, there are gives and takes and pros and cons," he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Contents from a tailings pond flow down Hazeltine Creek into Quesnel Lake near the town of Likely, B.C., in August 2014.

JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

Mt. Polley report out

MINING

Inspector has 19 suggestions after tailings pond collapse

Operators and engineers at the Mount Polley mine were over confident in the design of a tailings-storage facility that collapsed and created an environmental disaster, says British Columbia's chief inspector of mines.

Al Hoffman also found weak water-management standards at the site but said Thursday he couldn't find enough evidence to pursue charges under the Mines Act against Imperial Metals Corp.

"There were no non-compliance (issues) that we could find," Hoffman told reporters. "That doesn't mean there won't be in the future. We're going to tighten up our regulations and improve our oversight."

Hoffman's report into the Mount Polley disaster makes 19 recommendations, including that all mines with the same storage facilities employ designated mine-safety managers and staff to oversee the management of tailings.

The disaster and the 15-month investigation, the largest and most-complex mining probe in B.C. history, has taken its toll on him personally, said Hoffman.

"It's been the most difficult period of my entire career, to be blunt," he said.

"It's something I never hoped would happen on my watch. Now, I feel very strongly that we have the recommendations going forward that we can, to a large extent, prevent this from ever happening again."

An independent panel of engineering experts appointed by the B.C. government reached similar conclusions about the cause of the tailings-pond breach last January.

Both reports found the spill was caused by a poorly designed dam that didn't account for drainage and erosion failures associated with glacial till beneath the pond.

"The root causes of the event were organizational," Hoffman said. "My report describes how a mistaken belief in the foundation characteristics led to a design of a dam that was inadequate for its location."

Hoffman's report said the company and its engineers "did not fully recognize and manage geotechnical and water management risks associated with design, construction ... and operation of the tailings storage facility."

Mines Minister Bill Bennett said he accepts the report's recommendations and plans to introduce legislation that cracks down on companies that do not comply with mining regulations.

"I hope to be taking legislation forward in the spring that will authorize administrative penalties under the mining legislation so that we can levy penalties easily, quickly when necessary, and that obviously will help us in terms of compliance," he told reporters.

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‘Epic’ year for the mayor

CITY HALL

Robertson’s end-of-2015 interview with Metro

Emily Jackson
Metro | Vancouver

He spearheaded the failed transit referendum and he didn’t end street homelessness as promised.

But those challenges didn’t stop Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson from really enjoying the first year of his third term, a year where he felt he took the city to the next level when it comes to taking action on climate change.

“2015 was an epic year for me as mayor,” Robertson said Thursday in a year-end interview with Metro at his City Hall office. “I got to meet the pope and go to the White House and the Paris climate summit, and got quality time with the new prime minister and his ministers.”

He takes the missed goals around homelessness to heart — he was elected three times on a pledge to get people off the streets, but there are still nearly 500 sleeping rough according to the spring homeless count — but said Vancouver has been “off the charts” in other areas such as its new goal to rely 100 per cent on renewable energy by 2050.

“Vancouver is showing up on the global radar like never before, hosting the Women’s World Cup and the city just feeling much more prosperous and fun. It feels like we’re coming of age as a city and that feels awesome.”

Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson awaits a visit from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at city hall Thursday.
JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO

But next year, he intends to focus closer to home.

“Next year, I want to make sure I’m more focused on housing again,” Robertson said. He hopes when the new rental units built over the past four years open it will ease the crunch on renters, and said he will continue to make ending homelessness a “top priority.”

> **“It feels like we’re coming of age as a city and that feels awesome.”**
> Gregor Robertson

Actions such as the rental bank, supportive housing on city land and opening shelters have helped vulnerable citizens, but the city needs more funding from the province and the federal governments to solve the problem, he said.

It’s here, and on the transit file, where he looks forward to the new federal government’s positive relationship with cities. It’s frustrating not to have the funding to solve big challenges alone, he said.

“The new federal government gives us an opportunity to reboot the whole process for transit investment, which is great,” he said. (He called the referendum “impossible” and says it shouldn’t have happened.) Since the mayors’ 10-year plan is ready to go, he thinks the region is poised to secure investment.

“I’m hopeful this next year we’re going to see all of this move and get some relief to people who are getting passed up by the B-Line or unable to take transit somewhere in the region because of inadequate service.”

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WRONGFUL IMPRISONMENT

Representing self in a criminal trial is always a mistake: Crown

The compensation trial of a British Columbia man wrongfully imprisoned for 27 years is over, with Ivan Henry’s lawyers saying he deserves millions and provincial counsel insisting he sealed his own fate by representing himself.

B.C. Supreme Court Justice Christopher Hinkson reserved his decision Thursday on whether Henry should receive up to $43 million for his time behind bars.

Henry, 69, is suing the province after he was acquitted in 2010 of 10 sexual-assault convictions. The federal government and the City of Vancouver settled with Henry earlier this year for undisclosed amounts.

Crown lawyer John Hunter said the case boils down to Henry’s ill-informed decision to represent himself in court in 1982 and that awarding him millions of dollars in damages would send the wrong message.

> **“The message that should go out is that, ‘Yes, we’ll all try to make sure the trial is fair. But you need a lawyer.’”**
> Ivan Henry

“It should not be the case that if you decide to self-represent and things go badly that you’re going to get a chance years later to have an autopsy of the whole case ... and at the end of the day there could be a big payday for you.”

Henry should bear some responsibility for his conviction after he repeatedly refused legal counsel during his sexual-assault trial, Hunter said.

“The message that should go out is that, ‘Yes, we’ll all try to make sure the trial is fair. But you need a lawyer. You need a lawyer if you’re charged with a serious criminal offence.”’

Henry fired three of his lawyers and refused two more made available to him through legal aid during his original trial and sentencing hearing, insisting that he would speak on his own behalf.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Camp experience for refugees

PHILANTHROPY

Fircom hopes to raise $25,000 to host 25 kids

Matt Kieltyka
Metro | Vancouver

Camping is a rite of passage for many young Canadians and one local campground is hoping to extend that experience to newly-arrived refugees.

Gambier Island's Camp Fircom, which is owned by the United Church of Canada, is raising funds this holiday season to offer at least 25 children who have escaped conflict in Syria and elsewhere a spot in its summer camps next year.

Jeff Willis, Fircom's executive director, says $25,000 is needed to cover the cost of 25 one-week camping trips and to take the children shopping for camp essentials, such as sleeping bags and hiking boots.

Like many organizations and individuals in Canada across all spectrums, Willis said camp staff feel the need to help in any way they can.

"Camping is a great way to introduce people to Canadian culture," said Willis. "We've seen a lot of photos and newscasts (of the Syrian crisis) and I kept thinking 'we should create space for refugees that can be really accommodating'. So we're reaching out to our members, and anyone who has been to our camp, to try to make it happen."

Willis said the response so far has been excellent and is buoyed by a call from the Canadian Camping Association urging other camp operators to also reach out to refugee families.

Canada has committed to accepting 25,000 refugees from Syria by the end of February.

According to the Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia, 2,000 of those are expected in British Columbia (400 by the end of the year).

> Camping is a great way to introduce people to Canadian culture.
> Jeff Willis

Campers kayak near Camp Fircom on Gambier Island, British Columbia. COURTESY CAMP FIRCOM

FUNDRAISING

Charities leverage technology to tap millennial dollars

A group of 20-somethings flew from Vancouver to El Salvador earlier this month to build new homes for agricultural families displaced by flooding.

Their materials included wood, fibre cement and, most importantly, personalized videos to message to their friends.

The millennials used person-to-person videos much like the popular messaging app Snapchat to record heartfelt donation requests, and then fanned them out to their social networks. In short order, each had crowd-funded the $3,000 required per home for the 20 families.

The innovative fundraising method that leverages several technologies was developed by a Vancouver technology startup called Change Heroes.

It's just one of several ventures by British Columbia-based tech companies that are turning philanthropy on its head. They're doing it by tapping the hard-to-reach millennial demographic using the digital medium that dominates their lifestyle.

By using the tools young adults communicate with, in this case personal, one-to-one video messages, more than 50 per cent of those asked made donations. The average donation was $250.

"It's the highest converting fundraising platform on the planet, it's way higher than a person on a street, a black-tie dinner or golf tournament," said Taylor Conroy, CEO of Change Heroes.

The cost associated with persuading people to give to charities has jumped over the past five years from $150 per donor to upwards of $800 each, Conroy said.

Millennials represent a vast potential donor base. The problem is that traditional charities don't know how to connect, say the experts. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Change Heroes campaign runners Brandee Johnston, left, and Kalee Hewlett screw hinges on a door for a home in Santiago Nonualco, El Salvador. THE CANADIAN PRESS/HANDOUT

> (Millennials) are so web-fluent that they live online — and charities don't.
> John Bromley

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LEGALIZING CANNABIS

Dispensaries best option for pot supply

Dispensaries, not liquor stores, are the best outlets to sell recreational pot, according to the Canadian Association of Medical Cannabis Dispensaries.

The statement comes shortly after B.C.'s and Ontario's public service unions called for legalized marijuana to be sold in liquor stores. Vancouver's Jamie Shaw, president of the CAMCD, said having the two substances under the same roof could be dangerous.

"A lot of people are using cannabis to get off of alcohol, so that isn't a very good message to send. There have been studies that confirm alcohol and cannabis together heighten the effects of both," she said.

Shaw said it makes sense to use the existing medical marijuana system and not have to "reinvent the wheel."

"Dispensaries have 20 years of expertise in providing safe and dignified access to medical cannabis," the statement reads.

Shaw used the U.S. as an example, specifically Colorado's legalization, which was built on the pre-existing dispensary model. The dispensaries within the Canadian association, she noted, are already licensed and regulated to address public health and safety concerns. To ensure pot gets into the hands of those who really need it, Shaw said a thorough, three-year certification process is in place for prospective members and that CAMCD adheres to strict identification checks.

"Dispensaries don't only check IDs, we check the doctor's paperwork, and we verify that they sent that paper for it," she explained.

The federal government is currently consulting with provinces and municipalities on how to best move forward. A timeline has yet to be released.

TEREZA VERENCA/METRO

ALEX AND ANI

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HUDSON'S BAY

THEBAY.COM

Pedestrians crossing Dunsmuir Street in Vancouver on Wednesday were greeted by a couple of men dressed in red morphsuits. The stunt was part of the Canadian Blood Services' Wrap It Up Red holiday campaign. TEREZA VERENCA/METRO

Staying out of the red

WRAP IT UP CAMPAIGN

Blood Services look to attract more donors to keep levels up

Tereza Verenca
For Metro

Paul Sue knows firsthand what it's like to be on the receiving end of a blood donation.

Ten years ago, the Vancouver resident was diagnosed with aplastic anemia, a condition where the body stops producing enough new blood cells. Things like eating fruits and vegetables, holding his newborn daughter and kissing his wife were "simple pleasures" that were not allowed.

"At that point, I just felt my whole world come crashing down," Sue told Metro during a press conference held for the Canadian Blood Services' Wrap It Up Red holiday campaign.

The diagnosis meant trips to the hospital were a daily requirement. By the end of the year-long treatment, Sue was the recipient of more than 100 blood transfusions.

Despite being a blood donor before his diagnosis, Sue said he's gained an even bigger appreciation for what it's like to be on the other side of the fence.

"You really appreciate just how much dependent you are when you're not well, on the kindness of strangers — everyone from the volunteer drivers who took me to the hospital, to friends and family who brought food over. But definitely above all, blood donors who kept me alive."

There are still 2,000 donor appointments that need to be filled this month in Metro Vancouver, according to David Patterson, director of donor relations for B.C. and Yukon.

Across Canada as a whole, that number is said to be around 125,000.

Patterson noted given the lull in blood donations during this past summer, the blood bank is slowly creeping back up to a healthy level.

"We're still not where we'd like to be, but we're on a better trend," he said. "The need in the Lower Mainland is constant."

For Sue, even though he's been in remission for a decade now, he said he could relapse at any time.

Visit blood.ca to learn more.

"You really appreciate, when you're not well, how dependent you are on the kindness of strangers, above all blood donors.
Paul Sue, blood transfusions recipient

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VANCOUVERING
THINK BIG. LIVE LOCAL
with icons by **Danielle Vallée** from the noun project

Mohammed's dream come true

Over the next few weeks, Metro will introduce readers to refugees who recently arrived in Vancouver. They will tell their stories of why they came here and what their aspirations are for the future. Meet Mohammed Alsaleh. Exactly two years ago he was being tortured. On Thursday, he met Canada's new prime minister.

CAFÉ POLITICS
REFUGEE

Neal Hall
For Metro | Vancouver

Top: Syrian refugee Mohammed Alsaleh outside his new New Westminster home on Wednesday. He hopes to be reunited with his family soon. JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO
Below: Mohammed Alsaleh poses with a selfie with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Thursday. CONTRIBUTED

Syrian refugee Mohammed Alsaleh can't believe his good fortune this week.

He has his first job interview next week, after being in Canada for only 13 months, and has met a new friend who has given him hope that he may be able to be reunited soon with his mother and three younger siblings.

And on Thursday, he got to meet Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in Vancouver.

"It's like a dream coming true," Alsaleh said. "On this very day two years ago I was being tortured in prison (in Syria), and today I had a chance to tell my story to the prime minister of Canada."

The 26-year-old added: "I'm so excited. I came here and knew nobody. Now I'm surrounded by friends."

Alsaleh came to Canada on Nov. 25, 2014, one of the first Syrian refugees admitted to the country. He had been imprisoned and tortured for speaking out against the regime of Syrian president Bashar al-Assad both publicly and on Facebook and Twitter. On Aug. 25, 2013, he was then a fourth-year medical student writing an exam at university when Syrian security forces came in and arrested him.

"They hung me from the ceiling for three days," he explains. "I was nearly killed."

After spending 120 days in prison, he was released and fled to Lebanon, where he washed cars for 12 hours a day and $20. He began losing hope for the future. "I lost my family, my education, everything."

He applied to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. Last year, he was told that he was accepted by Canada.

"It was like winning the lottery," he says. "I was so happy."

Once he settled in a basement room in New Westminster, he began worrying about his family he left behind in the Syrian city of Al-Hasakeh — his mother, three brothers and two sisters.

His father died 16 years ago.

His mother, a teacher, lost her job when an ISIL bombing closed the schools. His two oldest brothers fled to Turkey, took an inflatable boat to Greece, walked through seven countries and now are in Germany.

His mother took her three youngest children to Turkey, where they now live in the border town of Kilis. He investigated trying to enter medical school here but was told he would have to start over, so Alsaleh is taking a course to become a care support worker for seniors. This week, he was offered an interview for a job at the Immigration Services Society of B.C., counselling arriving Syrian refugees. He also met a new friend, Deana Brynildsen of New Westminster, who had read about Alsaleh in the New Westminster Record and was touched by his story, especially where he admitted he didn't know five Canadians who could sponsor his family coming to Canada.

Brynildsen is semi-retired but had worked for Canadian diplomatic missions in Pakistan, Kenya, Peru, Kuwait and China. She invited the young man over for coffee.

"As he left, I said, 'Good luck with your family'," she recalls of the meeting three weeks ago.

She started thinking about what more she could do. Last week, she started a GoFundMe campaign to raise the $30,000 needed to sponsor Alsaleh's mother, brother and two sisters.

In the first week, 70 people have donated $5,175.

"I'm so excited, I can't wait to tell my family," Alsaleh says.

VANCOUVER TRENDING

HIDDEN BOUNTY: URBAN FORAGING

Amy Logan
For Metro | Vancouver

On a Saturday earlier this fall, mycologist Sharmin Gamiet led a sold-out Forager Foundation workshop on mushroom identification in Lynn Canyon.

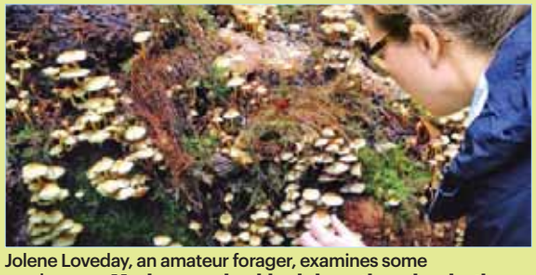
Hiking through the mossy forest, she pointed out clusters of delicate mushrooms, carefully distinguishing the poisonous from the edible. Many of the Foundation's workshops, ranging from medicinal plant identification to culinary plant foraging, have quickly sold out, suggesting an increasing interest in urban foraging.

Founded in 2013 by ethnobotanist Bryce Watts, the Foundation's mandate is to "promote traditional cultural knowledge and reconnect people and nature."

Popular with outdoorsy Vancouverites who long to reconnect to the land, and foodies who value the earthy flavours of wild-crafted ingredients, urban foraging taps into the rich history of traditional foods and medicine.

Watts also notes that its popularity can also be linked to Vancouver 's strong "locavore movement and the desire to reduce the carbon footprint."

The Falling Fruit Map (urbanhuntress.com) offers a searchable map of edible trees and shrubs



Jolene Loveday, an amateur forager, examines some mushrooms. **Mushrooms should only be gathered under the supervision of a trained expert.** AMY LOGAN/FOR METRO

The Vegan Pudding & Co.'s "truly incredible" treats are just that. ERIN IRELAND/METRO

FOOD NOTES

VEGAN PUDDING

Dessert looks as good as it tastes

Erin Ireland
Metro | Vancouver

Sometimes, the first sign of a mediocre restaurant is a hyperbolic claim plastered on the front door: "best _____ in Vancouver!"

However, in the case of Vegan Pudding & Co., I've found every word of their marketing to be delightfully true. Sora and Hiro, the Japanese husband-and-wife-team behind what they claim is the world's only vegan custard pudding store, call their product "truly incredible"... it's "rich like whole milk and smooth like raw silk". I couldn't create a more accurate description myself.

Made with kabocha squash, coconut milk, maple syrup and a variety of other plant-based ingredients, this vegan dessert looks and tastes as creamy as if it came from an udder.

Sold from a take-away counter at 422 Richards St. and a growing number of stockists, the uniquely delectable pudding is also organic and gluten free.

Eight flavours grace their menu, including Hoji-cha (roasted green tea), Roasted Black Sesame, Earl Grey Tea, Strawberry, Chocolate, Caffe Mocha and Matcha.

If you have to pick just one?

Original Vanilla with caramel sauce stole my heart. Also worth a try is Hiro and Sora's Vegan Creme Brulee, sweetened with maple sugar.

SEA TO SKY

YOGA IS SO HOT RIGHT NOW

Calming the nervous energy

Metro's Cam Tucker tests his flexibility in more than one way while tackling a hot yoga class for the first time

Cam Tucker
Metro | Vancouver

Beads of sweat drip to the black mat underneath my feet. A light grey T-shirt, taken out of the drier only a few hours before, is once again completely drenched.

I struggle to gain my balance as I clutch the inside of my left foot with my left hand and gingerly lean my chest forward, while my hip stretches further up. A bottle of water and towel at my side are fleeting salvations from the constant heat.

I'm doing it. I'm taking a yoga class, my first yoga class — a hot yoga class. Nearly an hour earlier, I apprehensively entered into the Cypress room at the YYoga Kitsilano studio, a repetitive thought passing through my head: "What have I gotten myself into?"

Amazing how quickly that nervous energy vanished.

Getting into the habit of deep, soothing breaths helps, inhaling and exhaling in a relaxing rhythm. Cat-cow pose, for whatever reason, still perplexes me and I fear I'll never get the hang of that one. But as the one-hour class continues, it feels like the poses come more natural as you go through them, step by step.

At some point, the heat is no longer noticeable. It's just becomes part of the room. For myself, this is no longer just about surviving or getting through the hour without humiliating myself.

It's an experience, and an enjoyable one at that.

Cam Tucker took on his nerves and out-of-shape body by taking a class. COLOURBOX.COM

As an adult, I had never taken a yoga class; in fact I had no real desire to until the idea to write about the experience was brought up a few weeks ago, and even then, I was nervous about it.

For starters, I'm out of shape. Have been for years. I used to work out at the gym — curls for the girls I used to joke about my regimen as an immature 20-year-old brat — until I realized that sitting on the couch when I came home from work ultimately didn't require as much effort as a bench press.

(Trying to type, in the hours after the hot yoga class, my arms felt about as sore as they would after lifting weights at the gym.)

And when the class came to ended — Namaste — and I stepped out into the refreshingly cooler air still drenched in sweat, I was glad I did.

Though I must admit, driving northbound on Burrard Street through the downtown core heading to the office can test that peaceful frame of mind.

For myself, this is no longer just about surviving or getting through the hour without humiliating myself.

throughout Vancouver, and Vancouver Urban Foragers Facebook page offers a forum to share knowledge and upcoming events.

Vancouver' s mild climate and year round bounty from both land and sea make it an ideal locale for urban foraging, with kayakers frequently harvesting fresh oysters and sea asparagus for campfire feasts, city strollers sourcing wild nettles for pesto or medicinal tea, and hikers plucking fresh plantain to calm a bee sting.

As Watts notes, although Vancouverites love to hike, many lack that "deeper knowledge" of surrounding plants, a rich knowledge based in local First Nations traditions.

Fostering a respect for the traditional uses of local culinary and medicinal plants in turn creates a more respectful relationship to nature. Even in winter, Vancouver offers up a rich abundance of food and medicine, just as it has for thousands of years. You just have to know where and how to look.

Left: The roots of certain ferns, such as the bracken, can be used as a thickening, corn starch-like agent in cooking, and **fiddleheads are considered a delicacy.**
AMY LOGAN/FOR METRO

Right: The forests of North Vancouver offer up a bounty of foraging possibilities.
AMY LOGAN/FOR METRO

Riverview to get big makeover

HEALTH CARE

$175 million earmarked for Coquitlam facilities

Tereza Verenca
Metro | Vancouver

The B.C. government unveiled a $175-million plan to renew Coquitlam's Riverview Lands on Thursday.

The money will go toward two new health-care buildings on the 244-acre lot. The first is a 105-bed mental health facility that will replace the Burnaby Centre for Mental Health and Addiction (an increase of 17 beds).

The province has pegged the cost at $100 million with opening slated for late 2019.

The second building will accommodate the 28-bed Maples Adolescent Treatment Centre and the 10-bed Provincial Assessment Centre. Construction on that is expected to start in 2017 at a cost of $75 million.

The report, titled A Vision for Renewing Riverview Lands, centres around five themes: mental health, heritage and environment, a complete community, housing and economic development.

"When we decided on the news for Riverview, we were clear that we were not returning to a time when patients would become invisible again," Health Minister Terry Lake said of the old Riverview Hospital, which once housed the mentally ill. "We want, in as much as possible, to move people through a continuum so that they can be back in their communities."

The project will also include a health care district as well as market and supportive housing.

"What we heard from people was a variety of things, which included a (mixed-use development) because people think it should have some completeness as community," said Housing Minister Rich Coleman, adding no decisions regarding market housing have been made yet.

The master plan is built on a break-even model, meaning all costs to renovate and restore the Riverview Lands will be funded by revenue generated by the property.

Thursday's announcement was a result of a two-year consultation process with community groups, First Nations, stakeholders and the public. The document, meanwhile, will be presented to the City of Coquitlam early next year.

Seventy-five buildings remain on the site, with many so deteriorated they'll need extensive renovations.

We want, in as much as possible, to move people through a continuum so that they can be back in their communities.
Health Minister Terry Lake

The provincial government announced an "ambitious" plan for the Riverview Lands in Coquitlam on Thursday. METRO FILE

From left, Linda Reimer, MLA for Port Moody-Coquitlam, Housing Minister Rich Coleman, Child and Family Development Minister Stephanie Cadieux and Health Minister Terry Lake. TEREZA VERENCA/METRO

IN BRIEF

Fiery crash kills driver
One motorist died and another was taken to hospital, following a fiery two-vehicle collision just before 9 a.m Thursday. on Highway 99 north of Callaghan Road.

"One vehicle went off road and caught fire with the driver trapped inside," said Staff Sgt. Steve LeClair of Whistler RCMP. That driver died.

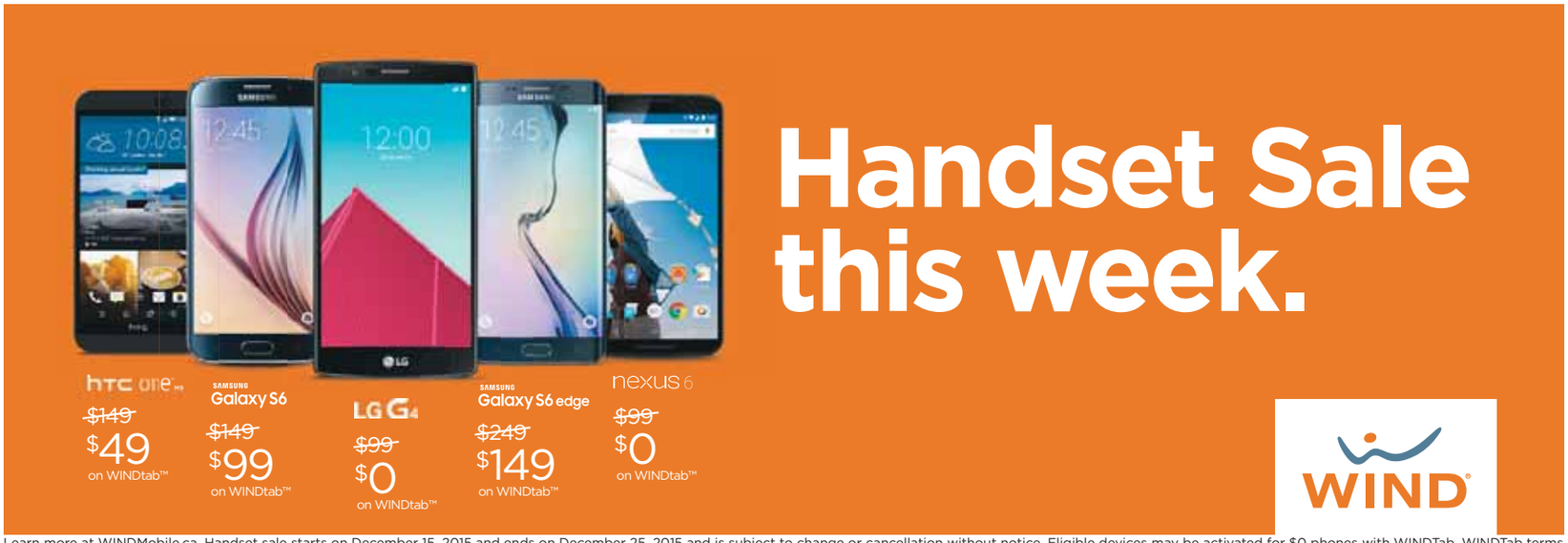
The other driver's condition was not known. METRO

Guilty pleas on child porn
A B.C. man imprisoned in Thailand for sexually assaulting young boys has pleaded guilty in Canada to five sex-tourism and pornography charges involving children.

Christopher Neil, 40, pleaded guilty in B.C. Supreme Court on Wednesday. The pleas pertain to two charges of sexual interference in Cambodia in 2003, one charge of possessing child pornography in Maple Ridge in 2007 and two charges of accessing child pornography in Vancouver in 2013. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Gang members lose appeal
Three members of a former Vernon, B.C., gang have lost their bid to have murder and other convictions overturned in the Appeal Court of B.C.

Peter Manolakos, Leslie Podolski and Sheldon O'Donnell were found guilty in the drug-related killings of three men in 2004 and 2008.
THE CANADIAN PRESS



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Back to drawing board

POLITICS

Memorial for communism victims gets a total overhaul

Michael Woods
Metro | Ottawa

For the controversial memorial to the victims of communism, it's back to the drawing board: a new location, a new design and a smaller budget.

On Thursday, the federal government squashed their predecessors' much-maligned plan to build the memorial on land southwest of the Supreme Court building.

That location was opposed by Ottawa city council, community and architectural groups and Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin.

Heritage Minister Mélanie Joly said the memorial will instead be built at the Garden of the Provinces and Territories, a few hundred metres to the west.

Minister of Canadian Heritage Melanie Joly. ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Joly said she consulted more than 30 people, including opposition party critics, and there was consensus that the memorial should be moved there.

"It is a place clearly accessible to residents and visitors," she said.

Joly also decried the "extremely political" process by which the proposed location was chosen by the former Conservative government, saying it lacked openness and transparency.

"The process of this monument was too political, too divisive and ultimately far from its goal of remembering the horror of victims of communism," she said. The move is pending approval from the NCC's board of directors.

The design of the memorial, which has also come under criticism, will be scrapped.

Joly said a consultation process and new design competition for the monument will be launched in the new year, with a view to completing the memorial by 2018.

$370,000

The Stephen Harper government had already spent $370,000 on the troubled memorial to communism victims.

The planned $5.5-million budget for the memorial is also no more, but Joly said the federal government is still helping to fund it. It's an important monument that ought to be celebrated, she said.

"But at the same time, the process has to be an open, transparent and inclusive one. And that's exactly why we're doing this right now."

The federal government's contribution to the project will be capped at $1.5 million, half of the project's new cost. The project's proponent, charity organization Tribute to Liberty, will be responsible for the other half.

The previous government had already spent $370,000 on the memorial, Joly said.

HUMAN RIGHTS

PM won't contact Saudi king

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says he isn't planning to call Saudi Arabian authorities to ask that jailed blogger Raif Badawi be freed.

Trudeau said he won't pick up the phone right now on behalf of Badawi, who was sentenced to 1,000 lashes and 10 years in jail for his criticism of Saudi clerics.

"It's not in my immediate plans," he said.

Foreign Affairs Minister Stephane Dion raised the matter with his Saudi counterpart, Adel Al Jubeir, when they met in Ottawa on Thursday. They discussed the state of human rights in Saudi Arabia as well as Badawi's case, where Dion reiterated a request for clemency.

"Raif Badawi has a family who are here in Canada, which gives a certain connection," Trudeau said. "It's a humanitarian case on which we continue to express ourselves in a clear fashion." THE CANADIAN PRESS

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PM to focus on jobs, climate

POLITICS

Trudeau says there's no need to open Constitution

Justin Trudeau says there is no pressing problem facing the country that can only be resolved by opening the Constitution — a laborious, time-consuming road the new prime minister has no intention of going down.

That includes the fact that Quebec has never formally signed onto the Constitution, which was patriated in 1982 with a charter of rights by Trudeau's father, Pierre, over the objections of the province's then-separatist government.

"What I ask now to anyone who offers to open the Constitution, or says we should open the Constitution, is: what concrete problem are we trying to solve that is unsolvable without opening the Constitution?" Trudeau said during a 75-minute sit-down with the Ottawa bureau of The Canadian Press.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau speaks with reporters in Ottawa on Wednesday. PATRICK DOYLE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

"I'd rather be talking about climate change and energy issues and job creation and training and health care and all these things that will make a concrete difference in people's lives."

Trudeau scoffed at a suggestion that Quebec's continued refusal to sign the Constitution is a major problem.

"Which articulates itself how?" he asked rhetorically.

Some Quebecers will always complain that Quebec is excluded from the Constitution, Trudeau acknowledged. But the Constitution does apply to the province and nothing in it has limited Quebec's ability to deliver health care or education or take action on the issues that matter most to Quebecers, he said.

As well, he said Quebecers are among those who value the charter of rights most highly.

Moreover, Trudeau asserted that the Oct. 19 federal election showed, for the first time in three decades, that Quebecers want to re-engage and play a role in the governance of the country.

"More than half the MPs elected in Quebec are from the governing party. That is an indication that Quebecers are not excluded from government or feeling excluded from Canada."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

SENATE

Some politicians have argued that the Constitution should be opened to abolish or reform the Senate. But Trudeau has opted instead for reforms that can be implemented without changing the Constitution.

IN BRIEF

Ukraine wants more Canadian police trainers

Ukraine's newly appointed national police chief is asking Justin Trudeau's Liberal government for more help in establishing and training a professional security force.

Khatia Dekanoidze made the pitch to both RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson and Foreign Affairs Minister Stephane Dion in separate meetings over the last two days.

The creation of a trusted, national policing agency in the war-torn former Soviet country, formally enacted on Nov. 7, has become a major priority for President Petro Poroshenko's government, which is battling to clean up corruption within government and political institutions.

The RCMP already has a limited presence advising the country's Interior Ministry on security sector reform and training the reformed traffic police service, which was considered one of the most dubious agencies under the old regime of former president Viktor Yanukovych.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

FIRST NATIONS

Documents disclose Bill C-27 options

The Canadian government considered punishing First Nations who refused to comply with controversial financial transparency legislation by putting someone else in control of their books, according to newly released documents.

The Toronto Star obtained a memo prepared for former aboriginal affairs minister Bernard Valcourt in February — released in response to an access-to-information request — recommending options for dealing with First Nations that had not yet complied with the First Nations Financial Transparency Act (Bill C-27).

The law, brought in by the previous Conservative government, requires First Nations to submit financial documents, including audited financial statements and the salaries and expenses of chiefs and band councilors, to be published on the Indigenous and Northern Affairs website.

The partially redacted memo at one point discusses the idea of placing non-compliant First Nations under third-party management, which means a private-sector consultant would take over the administration of money associated with departmentally funded programs and services.

> **I'm not surprised they would have considered it as a tool, but the tool as a hammer doesn't work any longer.** New Democrat indigenous affairs critic Charlie Angus

The memo acknowledges this would be a risky move.

"Imposing a third-party funding agreement manager as a sanction of non-compliance for First Nations must be carefully considered and should be aligned with the funding agreement. An assessment of the default situation and potential risks to delivery of community programs and services should be considered," reads the memo dated Feb. 26.

"There is a potential risk to the (department)'s default management policy framework of employing third-party management as a sanction," says the memo.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde speaks at the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly in Gatineau on Dec. 8. ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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FREEDOM ROAD

$30M to free remote reserve

Tears flowed and a victory drumming song reverberated through the Manitoba legislature Thursday as an isolated reserve under one of the country's longest boil-water advisories received a lifeline to the outside world.

It was a day Chief Erwin Redsky said he never thought he would see in his lifetime — all three levels of government coming together to fund a $30-million all-weather road connecting the Shoal Lake 40 reserve and its 270 residents to the mainland.

The commitment marks a turning point for the community and for First Nations in Canada, he said.

"This is a new beginning," Redsky said, his voice shaking. "Let's not dwell on the past. Let's move forward together.

"First Nations will be part of this country to rebuild it again. Today, the work begins."

The reserve on the Manitoba-Ontario boundary was cut off 101 years ago during construction of an aqueduct to carry fresh water to Winnipeg. The land was taken without permission and residents have been living with the consequences ever since, Redsky said.

The reserve has been without clean water for 18 years. A new water treatment plant is too expensive to build without a road to transport supplies, he said. Residents have died crossing an ice road in the winter.

In the summer, the First Nation depends on an aging ferry, but the vessel failed a government inspection this year. Ambulances won't risk going to the community and children have to leave the reserve to continue their education past Grade 8.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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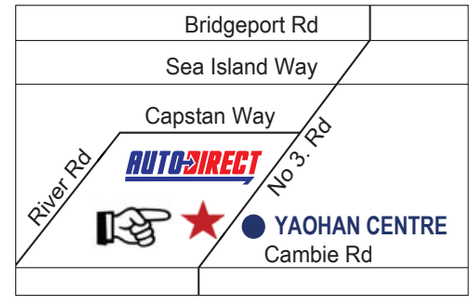

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'World is a living mosaic'

SOCIAL MEDIA

Campaign to highlight migrants' contributions

Migrants from around the world are sharing their life stories in a unique "I am a Migrant" campaign, launched by the International Organization of Migration to remind the world of the value of migrants.

Hundreds of people — including a Somali woman who moved to Canada to go to university, a French woman in Georgia and a Congolese artist in Mauritania — are participating in the global social media campaign, posting their profiles and photos on the website iamamigrant.org.

"We know from economic reports the incredible contributions migrants make. But it is easy to forget that," said Leonard Doyle, IOM spokesman. "We have to remind ourselves the world is a living mosaic and that makes it much richer."

The campaign comes at a time when the news has been focused on scenes of desperate refugees, and the sometimes extreme political reactions those images have provoked.

Doyle hopes showing the value of migrants through positive stories will shift the political narrative and counter xenophobia and anti-immigrant rhetoric prevalent in parts of Europe.

The Mexican government, an enthusiastic participant, will put "Soy Migrante" posters on display next month.

Facebook in Germany has also lent support, donating online advertising space. Four videos have been posted in German on Facebook in the last two days, garnering five million views as of noon Thursday.

The campaign — launched in time for the UN's International Migrants Day — builds on a crowd-funded initiative "I am an Immigrant," introduced earlier this year in the U.K. by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Reflections on life in a new country **1 Lauriane, from France, now in Georgia** — "Everyone refers to people like me as 'expats.' In reality, I am a migrant." **2 Nadifo, from Somalia, now in Canada** — "I think Canada is a good country, where multiculturalism is practised, where so many people are there together in peace." **3 Mihir, from India, now in the U.K.** — Mihir immigrated to the U.K. many years ago to follow his dream to become a journalist. "I feel Indian but I feel British, too. This is a duality." **4 Rahi, from Iraq, now in Belgium** — "(My family has been) given so many opportunities here that Belgium has become our second home." ALL PHOTOS VIA IAMAMIGRANT.ORG

EUROPE

EU plans border force

European Union heavyweights France and Germany on Thursday backed a potentially divisive plan for a border guard agency with powers to unilaterally deploy to member states unable or unwilling to manage their borders.

The border and coast guard project is chiefly aimed at protecting Europe's external borders in countries like Greece and Italy as they struggle to manage the arrival of hundreds of thousands of people fleeing conflict or poverty for better lives in Europe.

But the idea the agency could send ships, planes or other assets to a country even if it opposes the deployment is reviving fears about a loss of national sovereignty to unelected officials at the EU's executive Commission in Brussels.

Countries further north in Europe like Germany and Sweden — the preferred destinations of many migrants — are keen to have tighter controls to ease the flow of people, as is France. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

REPORT

Number of refugees top 20M

The global refugee population has surpassed the 20-million mark for the first time since 1992 while the number of those returning home is at its lowest level, says the United Nations refugee agency.

According to its 2015 mid-year update report, an average of 4,600 people are being forced to flee their countries every day as Syria's war remains the single biggest cause worldwide of both new refugees and continuing mass internal and external displacement.

By the end of June, there were 20.2 million refugees — up from 19.5 million a year ago — and 34 million internally displaced people (IDP) — up by 2 million — around the world.

In the first six months of the year, the international community received 993,600 asylum claims, accounting for a 78 per cent increase over the same period in 2014, said the report to be released in Geneva on Friday.

A child eats at a makeshift camp by the Greek-Macedonian border. GETTY IMAGES

"Forced displacement is now profoundly affecting our times. It touches the lives of millions of our fellow human beings — both those forced to flee and those who provide them with shelter and protection," said United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres in a statement.

"Never has there been a greater need for tolerance, compassion and solidarity with people who have lost everything."

While Canada's expedited resettlement of 25,000 Syrian refugees by the end of February is one bright spot amid the world crisis, the report also shows some worrisome trends.

Voluntary return rates — which measures how many refugees have safely returned home — are at their lowest levels in three decades. By June, only 84,000 people managed to go back to their home countries, compared to 107,000 in the same period last year.

The consequence of having more refugees stuck in exile is the pressure it puts on countries hosting them, something if unmanaged, "can increase resentment and abet politicization of refugees." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

WHERE THEY'RE COMING FROM

Most common source countries for refugees

1 **Syria:** 4.2 million. Fleeing civil war and the threat of extremist group Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

2 **Afghanistan:** 2.6 million. Fleeing the Taliban terrorist group.

3 **Somalia:** 1.1 million. Fleeing insurgency led by Al-Shabab.

4 **South Sudan:** 744,100. Fleeing civil war.

5 **Sudan:** 640,900. Fleeing civil war.

SOURCE: UNITED NATIONS REFUGEE AGENCY 2015 MID-YEAR REPORT

BURUNDI

Mission to investigate violence

The top UN human rights assembly approved a resolution on Thursday calling for the quick deployment of experts to Burundi to look into abuses amid spiralling violence in the east African country.

After a U.S.-led diplomatic push, the 47-member Human Rights Council, which counts Burundi among its members, approved the text that calls for the UN human rights chief to send in a mission of experts who are to report regularly on the rights situation there.

At least 87 people were killed on Dec. 11 in attacks on military facilities in Burundi's capital, Bujumbura.

UN officials have expressed fears the African country is headed toward civil war. Burundi has been in turmoil since the April announcement that President Pierre Nkurunziza would seek a third term in office, which he won in a disputed election in July.

Burundi was elected as a member of the Geneva-based Human Rights Council just weeks ago.

"Today's special session is an attempt to prevent — and that's a key word, prevent — mass atrocities by focusing attention and providing expert assistance in the region before it is too late," said Keith Harper, the U.S. ambassador to the council. He said it would add to "pressure" brought through other efforts by the European Union, the African Union and the UN Security Council on the Burundi crisis. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Ben Early yawns before classes at Roosevelt High School in Seattle. The Seattle school board voted last month to adopt an 8:45 a.m. start time beginning next year for all of its high schools and most of its middle schools. ELAINE THOMPSON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Let sleeping teens lie: Researchers

EDUCATION

Eight too early to start class, experts say

More school districts around the U.S. are heeding the advice of scientists who have long said that expecting teens to show up to class before 8 a.m. isn't good for their health or their report cards.

The Seattle school board voted last month to adopt an 8:45 a.m. start time beginning next year for all of its high schools and most of its middle schools, joining 70 districts across the nation who adopted a later start time in recent years.

The movement still has a long way to go: There are more than 24,000 U.S. high schools. Supporters expect that such decisions will be made more quickly now that people have mostly stopped debating the underlying science.

Proponents of later start times got a boost last year when the American Academy of Pediatrics said that while starting later isn't a panacea for teen health and academic problems, it can improve students' lives in many other ways.

"Essentially, across the board, any domain that you look at improves pretty dramatically," said Dr. Judy Owens of Boston Children's Hospital and author of the academy's policy statement on teen sleep. After the report, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also pushed for later bell times.

Research studies have shown later start times help combat sleep deprivation in teens, who naturally fall asleep later than their parents would like, and improve academic success, attendance, mental health and cut sleep-related car accidents.

Bridget Shelton, a freshman at Seattle's Roosevelt High School, believes the change in bell times will help her move from getting 6-7 hours of sleep to closer to 8 hours next year.

"I know many students that come in and are just struggling to stay awake," she said.

"Many of my friends are falling asleep in class."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JUSTICE

Hung jury means retrial in Freddie Gray case

Instead of a dramatic conclusion to the first of six trials of police officers in the death of Freddie Gray, the mistrial left Baltimore, Md., in suspense and confusion, with no immediate understanding of what happens next.

The city had braced for a possible repeat of the protests, destruction and dismay that engulfed the city in April after Gray's neck was broken in the back of a police van.

But several small marches ended peacefully overnight as the community tried to process the news.

Baltimore Circuit Judge Barry Williams acknowledged the hung jury Wednesday after the panel deadlocked over whether Officer William Porter had committed any crimes by failing to take measures that might have saved the life of the young black man, who was shackled and placed face down in the wagon after running from police.

> **They did the best that they could.... We are confident there will be another trial with a new jury.** Richard Shipley, Gray's stepfather

Maryland judiciary spokeswoman Terri Charles says lawyers confer again with the judge in the coming days, and that to her knowledge, prosecutors have not yet decided whether to retry Porter.

Jurors deliberated for three days over whether Porter committed manslaughter, assault, reckless endangerment and misconduct in office. In the end, they said they were at an impasse on every charge, and that a unanimous verdict was impossible.

Gray's stepfather, Richard Shipley, said the family is looking forward to another evaluation of the case by 12 fresh jurors.

"We are not at all upset with them and neither should the public be upset," Shipley said Wednesday.

"They did the best that they could.... We are confident there will be another trial with a new jury."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Putin describes Trump as 'bright and talented'

Vladimir Putin says Donald Trump is "bright and talented." The Russian word he used not only means "bright" in terms of intelligence but also "gaudy." Trump has cited the fact the two appeared — in separate segments — on the same episode of 60 Minutes as evidence of their bond. "I got to know him very well because we were both on 60 Minutes, we were stable mates and we did very well that night," he said in the fourth GOP debate.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Donald versus Kimmel

In an appearance on Jimmy Kimmel's late-night show Wednesday, Donald Trump was questioned about campaign issues, saying he's gotten calls of thanks from friends who are Muslim. "Those may have been crank calls," Kimmel replied. Kimmel used the example of his on-air sidekick, Guillermo Rodriguez, to question Trump's call for mass deportation. He said people who are willing to risk everything to get to the United States are good for the country.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CRIME

Exec who jacked up drug price arrested

Martin Shkreli, the former hedge-fund manager vilified for buying Turing Pharmaceuticals and jacking up the price of a life-saving drug more than 50-fold, was arrested Thursday on securities fraud charges unrelated to the furor.

The boyish-looking 32-year-old entrepreneur — an unapologetically aggressive businessman and relentlessly self-promoting figure who has called himself "the world's most eligible bachelor" on Twitter and recently plunged into the hip-hop world by buying an unreleased album by Wu-Tang Clan — was taken into custody in a grey hoodie and awaited an appearance in federal court in Brooklyn.

Online, many people took instant glee in his arrest, some of them joking about a judge ratcheting up his sentence or lawyers jacking up their hourly fees 5,000 per cent for defending him in his hour of need.

Shkreli was charged in an indictment unconnected to the drug price hikes imposed by his company Turing Pharmaceuticals.

$2 million

Martin Shkreli bought the only copy of a Wu-Tang Clan album titled Once Upon a Time in Shaolin, which the group sold on the condition that it not be released publicly. He said he paid $2 million.

The charges instead involve his actions at another pharmaceutical company, Retrophin, which he ran as CEO from 2012 to 2014.

The indictment said Shkreli and others orchestrated three interrelated fraud schemes from 2009 to 2014.

It said they fraudulently induced investors to sink their money into two separate funds and misappropriated Retrophin's assets to satisfy Shkreli's personal and professional debts.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Martin Shkreli is escorted by law-enforcement agents in New York on Thursday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Facebook is rolling out a feature called Photo Magic that will automatically address a message so it can be sent quickly to friends identified in a picture. ISTOCK

Facebook trying a little Photo Magic

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Feature aims to foster more allegiance to Messenger app

Facebook is trying to make it easier to send photos as the holiday season's picture-taking frenzy escalates.

The world's largest social-networking service is offering a feature called Photo Magic that will automatically address a message so it can be sent quickly to Facebook friends identified in a picture. The option relies on the same image-recognition technology that attaches people's names to Facebook posts.

Facebook Inc. will highlight Photo Magic in a Messenger update that started rolling out Thursday to users of Apple's iPhones and smartphones running on Google's Android software.

The update is being distributed to a broad audience after a month of testing among smartphone users in Australia. Facebook is planning to make Photo Magic available to Messenger users everywhere in the world, except in Canada and the European Union.

9.5B

Number of pictures already being sent each month through Messenger, according to Facebook

Messenger has more than 700 million users, about half the size of the audience on Facebook's social network.

Facebook is counting on Photo Magic to foster more allegiance to its Messenger app as it competes against other competing services such as Snapchat that have become particularly popular among teenagers and young adults.

As part of the Messenger upgrade, Facebook is also including an option that will allow users to change the colours of their exchanges with different friends and switch the formal name of a recipient to a nickname, such as "mom" or "dad."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TECHNOLOGY

Shaw says time right for Wind Mobile takeover

Shaw Communications says its proposed $1.6-billion takeover of Wind Mobile will provide an affordable entry into the industry and an expansion beyond Western Canada.

3Macs telecom analyst Troy Crandall said Wind Mobile now is finally a real threat to the established wireless players, and Shaw clearly has a plan to take the carrier national.

"Some of its competitors and even its investors had thought that Wind would just disappear," he said.

Meanwhile, the backing of Shaw gives Wind Mobile financial security for the first time since its founding in 2008 — one of a small group of new wireless players that aimed to take on Canada's three big telecoms.

The Wind purchase will allow Shaw to join BCE, Rogers and Telus in offering the entire slate of popular bundled services — wireless, television, home phone and Internet.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news
Weekend, December 18-20, 2015

THE BIG THING: GUFF

Baloney. Crapola. Baffling B.S. Or, as the Brits say, guff. Whatever you call it, overinflated, nonsensical language is an epidemic in the business world (and everywhere). Lucy Kellaway, the founder of Guffipedia, a new site that names and shames the ghastliest guffers, says the proliferation of goofy jargon is a "tragedy with no remedy." What do you think? Is guff a verbal scourge, or does it have its uses — other than being a convenient way to fill empty air?

SOURCE: THE FINANCIAL TIMES

1 Awful or awesome? Some of Guffipedia's stars include Speedo, for rebranding its swimming cap as a "hair management system," advertising firm Circus Street, which boasts that its brands become "multi-dimensional communication scaffolds," and an unnamed food-industry analyst who calls bottled water an "affordable, portable lifestyle beverage."

2 When guff works So why do people continue to appreciate (and repeat) utter nonsense? "It makes you sound clever; it shows you belong to a club; it is an alternative to thinking, and ... you can say things that sound decent but are actually meaningless," Kellaway says.

3 Dazzled by drivel In a study published last month, psychologists at the University of Waterloo presented subjects randomly with computer-generated sentences like "Wholeness quiets infinite phenomena," real tweets from spirituality guru Deepak Chopra (example: "Attention and intention are the mechanics of manifestation") and common sayings ("A river cuts through a rock, not because of its power but its persistence"). Many people found all three types of statements profound. Believers in the paranormal were more likely to say the fake and New-Age phrases were really deep.

Home at the haunted house for the holidays

Stephen Thomas
For Metro

The holidays are coming up, and, if you're like a lot of people, you'll be heading home for a few days to spend time with the fam. And by home, I mean not your home, but the house where your parents live.

Going home and hanging out with your family can be hard for a lot of people. Triple-brewed tensions that have been soaking in a familial collective unconscious for decades, divisive voting allegiances, racism, shame at confronting the shortcomings you only really feel in contrast to high-achieving siblings — the list goes on.

As your parents age, a procession of hellspawn rush in to fill the dark spaces in the home.

But going home is especially hard when your parents' house is haunted.

Like mine. That's right, my parents got themselves a big old haunted house.

Haunted by what, you ask?

Ghosts, of course. Ghosts of vicious arguments, traumatic memories and just your standard-issue childhood. How do you know if you're visiting a haunted house, you ask?

Let me tell you a story.

I went home for Christmas last year, and I was hanging my coat up in the closet when a hand came out and took my coat from my hands, hung it neatly on the rack, and hissed, quite politely, "You will never live up to your father's expectations."

The strange thing is, when I was a kid, I didn't even notice that my parents' house was haunted. Although maybe the house had fewer ghosts then. You know, there are things you don't notice about your family when you're a kid because your home is like water to a fish: It's all you know. It's only when you start to see what other families are like that you twig that not all houses' hallways emit deep, echoey whispers of "GET OUUUUUT."

Or maybe that just wasn't there when I was a kid. It does make a certain kind of sense that as your parents age, and you age, and once-vital arguments congeal into silence, a procession of hellspawn would rush in to fill the dark spaces of the home where your little soul was nurtured, undeterred by kind words, or lovers, or therapy — nay, growing stronger and feeding on the food only of itself, like a human centipede that ... grows.

Anyway, how to get rid of these ghosts? There is only one way. That's right: exorcism.

There's a little-known law of the Swiss psychotherapist Carl Jung that says every time you marshal your bravery and broach a Terrifying Topic with your parents, or other family member, in the Haunted Location, the ghost who haunts that location withers and dies. So: Do that.

"But I don't have ghosts in my home!" you say. Don't you? Listen carefully to the silence in the kitchen when everyone else has gone to sleep, and the dinner's dishes, now dry, rest in the dish rack, and two stained glasses of wine stand on the dining room table.

Listen to the hush.

Happy holidays!

Stephen Thomas lives and writes in Toronto. Follow him on Twitter @skwthomas.

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD

metroview

You don't have a right to a free online comment section

Commenters on The Globe and Mail's website are (predictably) dismayed.

The Toronto Star announced the end to its online comment sections on Wednesday, and when the Globe reported the move, its own readers — more than 400 of them — mourned the loss.

One wrote a six-point defence of comment sections as avenues for free expression. Some argued the "ultra-left downtown elites" couldn't handle the heat. Many called it short-sighted and said they've no interest in commenting on social media. They like their anonymity and even promised to drop their subscriptions if the Globe followed suit.

But the Star is not out on a limb. Dozens of media outlets around the world, including Postmedia in September, have made the same call. Why? Because comments are rife with abuse and threats, racism, sexism and bigotry (for which the publishers are legally responsible). No one, not even the Globe commenters, denies it. Cleaning up that mess takes resources, and media companies are rather tight on resources these days.

Some outlets, the New York Times being the most prominent, argue comments sections should be thought of not as an added bonus for readers but as the meat of engagement. Lose engagement and you lose readers. Lose readers and you lose money.

It's perhaps easier for the Grey Lady to downplay moderating costs; It has the advantage of being part of a new digital project to analyze and develop tools for reader comments.

But supposing comments sections really are integral to the exercise of online journalism, readers should be willing to pay. Maybe that means an extra fee in order to comment. Maybe it means watching an ad or just paying more overall for the news.

Readers should know digital and print subscriptions do not cover the cost of journalism, let alone endangered investigative journalism, let alone comment monitors. Ad dollars are only going in one direction, and while companies flail about for the best way to build readership and new revenue, some functions will get cut.

Free speech is important but it's not a newspaper's job to give it you. Media companies aren't public property. And your anonymity as a commenter is not a right.

So, yes, it would be great to have lively, spirited, hate-free debate in comments. Reporters would love to find story ideas there, along with new angles and meaningful critiques and media executives wouldn't scoff at 400-plus comments on a single piece.

But if you want it, it should cost you.

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MOVIES MUSIC TELEVISION DIGITAL

Despite playing one of the most recognizable characters of all time, Anthony Daniels, inset, almost never gets recognized. HANDOUT

The voice of 'We're doomed!'

ANTHONY DANIELS

Playing C-3PO comes with its share of strange moments

Richard Crouse
For Metro Canada

Having one of the most recognizable voices in movie history can lead to some surreal moments. Just ask Anthony Daniels. He's played C-3PO in all seven Star Wars films, including this weekend's Star Wars: The Force Awakens and once rented a car with a very familiar voice on the GPS.

"I felt uncomfortable with me — very clearly — giving me instruction for something I didn't know. I found it quite bizarre. I was driving thinking, 'This is unnatural.'"

Other times the voice, which in real life is less mannered than his on-screen counterpart, brings him unexpected recognition.

For some of his fans, seeing isn't believing — hearing is.

"One of the most charming things that happens to me is when an adult will bring a child to me and say, 'He doesn't believe you're C-3PO.'

"And why would he? I'm some old guy with white hair. Then I do the voice. You see the sound go in one ear and then there is an absolutely realistic time delay whilst the synapses process this. Nothing happens for a second-and-a-half, then suddenly there's a smile and excitement. I love that delay while they process it. You couldn't buy that. I've been given that and it gives me utter joy because it is without guile. It is just an honest recognition of something I did."

A week before Daniels trekked to Tunisia in 1976 to begin shooting the sci-fi space opera, he was a stage actor performing in Tom Stoppard's absurdist play Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead.

"It's about two nobodies," he says. "Rosencrantz is a bit gung ho, (he) doesn't think. Doesn't work things out really; just goes for the main thing. His friend Guildenstern is much more reserved, much more intellectual. He thinks about things. Worries about things.

"There I am a week later playing C-3PO in the desert with R2D2. I would say it was three or four years later that something in my brain went, 'Wait a minute, R2 and 3PO are Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.' There is a nice synergy there, or connection I think. 3PO is the clever one and R2 is the gung ho one. They're odd couple buddies. It is a great dynamic to act off."

Today C-3PO and R2D2 are seen as a classic combo, but during filming, Daniels had his doubts it would work.

"The problem for me was R2D2 never made any sounds so I was playing off myself. Not to aggrandize myself, but it was quite a challenge. It was a bit like a terrible Whose Line Is It Anyway? where you pretend a chair is your best friend.

> **"The problem for me was R2D2 never made any sounds so I was playing off myself.**
> Anthony Daniels

"When I saw the final movie and there were R2's beeps and responses, to me it was total magic because that was the first time I ever saw it. They had woven a conversation after the fact."

Playing the golden droid has been a lifelong career for Daniels. The 69-year-old actor was just 30 years old when he first donned C-3PO's suit and has since appeared in person or voice in dozens of movies, television shows, commercials, PSAs and live events as the character. He's even in the legendary The Star Wars Holiday Special and says he's been "very lucky to be given the chance" to play C-3PO but calls that his "business life."

"I don't go around saying, 'Do you know who I am?'

When I suggest he could at least use his fame and the C-3PO voice to get great tables in restaurants he says, "No, no, no. Then they'd say there's no table tonight or tomorrow. I don't think people would be too terribly impressed to have me in the restaurant. Were I to enter in a gold suit then I could have the entire room to myself!"

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The Shortest Day calls all the shorts

SCREENING Some of the films screening for The Shortest Day from top: Be the Snow, Call It Blue, Song for Cuba, and Bacon & God's Wrath.

FREE FILM SERIES

Canadian films join in a global celebration of short movies

Shorter attention spans are spawning memorable movies.

That's how award-winning Toronto filmmaker and animator Sol Friedman sees it. His eight-minute film Bacon & God's Wrath, a whimsical study of a 90-year-old Jewish woman weighing her decision to have her first taste of pork, is among 28 shorts screening in various locations during the free film series called The Shortest Day.

Started in France in 2011, The Shortest Day is now in 50 countries and is called a "celebration" of shorts, rather than a film fest.

The Canadian-made movies are bundled into four free programs: Dramas and Comedies; Kids; Family and Musical. They screen Friday to Monday at more than 80 venues across Canada, from shopping malls to theatres, leading up to Tuesday's Winter Solstice, the shortest day of the year. Go to theshortestday.ca for a list of programs, films and locations.

"This art form, which has always been on the periphery . . . is certainly having its moment," said Friedman, 33. He blends action and animation in Bacon & God's Wrath, along with a real pig's head that has a "conversation" with Razie Brownstone about her musings on religion, family and why, with the help of some research on "the Google," she's ready to eat bacon.

Bacon & God's Wrath is also having its moment. After screening at TIFF, it will be part of the Sundance Film Festival's shorts program in January and was recently named one of Canada's Top 10 short films for 2015. Friedman said he wanted to make a short on the subject and needed somebody willing to "break this taboo." He found it in Brownstone, a family friend.

It's an exciting time to be a filmmaker, he said, a bit like the Wild West. "With the tools being what they are, there's no excuse not to make a film if you're so inclined."

The shorts in the showcase are made using live action, stop-motion and animation techniques, and include Torill Kove's Oscar-nominated Me and My Moulton, Cordell Barker's If I Was God and Tamara Segura's experimental short about music and memory, Song for Cuba.

Films from other filmmakers include Call It Blue, directed by Ryerson University's Julia Hendrickson, winner of Best Student Short at the Kerry (Ireland) Film Festival, and Amir Honarmand's Be the Snow, about a pillow that runs away from home to explore the world.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Q&A WITH ACTOR SARAH GADON

Inspired by long-vs.-short filmmaking, we set a challenge for Sarah Gadon, ambassador for The Shortest Day film celebration: give five-word answers to our long questions.

You have appeared in shorts and you made your directing debut with an episode of the Movie Network documentary series Reelside, which could indeed be considered a short. Why do you think shorts are a good method for you to explore your creativity as an actress and filmmaker?
Shorts = less money to make.

There are 28 shorts organized into four thematic programs. As someone who has worked so extensively with David Cronenberg (Maps to the Stars, Cosmopolis, A Dangerous Method), what would you call a program that was made up of Cronenberg shorts?
Indigestion: Brief Encounters With Pain (18A)

As The Shortest Day's 2015 English-language ambassador, do you see an ambassadorial role elsewhere for yourself now that you have the experience — perhaps in the diplomatic service, working at an embassy or the United Nations, or as the Canadian ambassador to a country of your choosing?
Yes. Global film ambassador, please.

If there was an opportunity for a filmmaker to collaborate with you on a film project that could eventually become a short film about you and your life, perhaps your day-to-day existence and how you spend your free time away from the cameras, what would this short be titled?
Codependence: A Small Canadian & Caffeine (PG).

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CURMUDGEONLY CHRISTMAS QUIZ

Not everyone loves the holidays — in fact, some people dread them. Take this quiz to see if you're a Christmas curmudgeon:

1. It's Nov. 1, the day after Halloween, and you walk into a store and hear Christmas music blaring. What do you do?

a. Buy the store, shut it down
b. Swear at the top of your lungs
c. Go on a rampage

2. A loved one asks for a gift that's outrageously expensive. What's your game plan?

a. Flat out no
b. Steal it
c. Buy it, then tear it to shreds

3. You've been tasked with bringing a side dish for Christmas dinner. What do you bring?

a. Something you picked up at a convenience store on the way to the party — which you're late to
b. Booze
c. Water

4. You pass by a Santa look-alike on the street, collecting money for a local charity. What's your reaction?

a. "Leave. Me. Alone!"
b. "Make me a sandwich."
c. "Water... gun."

5. It's Christmas morning. What's your first thought when you open your eyes?

a. Bah humbug
b. @#&$!
c. Bright light! Bright light!

Mostly a: You're Scrooged — You're selfish and cynical, but you may learn some lessons this Christmas that will turn your frown upside down.
Mostly b: You're a Bad Santa — You've been misbehaving (a lot), but this might be the Christmas you go good.
Mostly c: You're a Gremlin — You'd better not eat any Christmas cookies after midnight.

Whether you're a curmudgeon or not, there's a Christmas movie for you. Starting Dec. 8 and running until Jan. 12, Hollywood Suite is offering a free preview of uncut and commercial-free movies that shaped the '70s, '80s, '90s and 2000s. Available on television service providers across the country, this free preview includes access to Hollywood Suite On Demand, where available. Rediscover such Christmas classics as Gremlins (1984), Scrooged (1988), Bad Santa (2003) and more.

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Star Wars: May the fashion be with you

COSTUME

Legacy lives on with wardrobe in latest movie instalment

From Obi-Wan Kenobi's Jedi robes to Darth Vader's mask and Princess Leia's golden bikini, costumes featured in Star Wars are arguably as famous as the franchise's characters themselves.

As The Force Awakens arrives in theatres on Friday, costume curators and creators can't wait to see how fashion plays a role in the latest instalment.

"From the prequels, you look at some of Natalie Portman's gowns, they're so lavish, they're so fashionable. And what that says to me is that society is doing well," said Saul Drake, project director of the Smithsonian travelling exhibition Rebel, Jedi, Princess, Queen: Star Wars and the Power of Costume.

"What's really interesting to see for The Force Awakens costumes is that it's kind of almost a return to form for the classic style of costume. They're very sparse, they're very monotone, there's not a lot of embellishment on there. And without even seeing the movie, what that tells me is that the society is not doing that well. There's struggle going on.

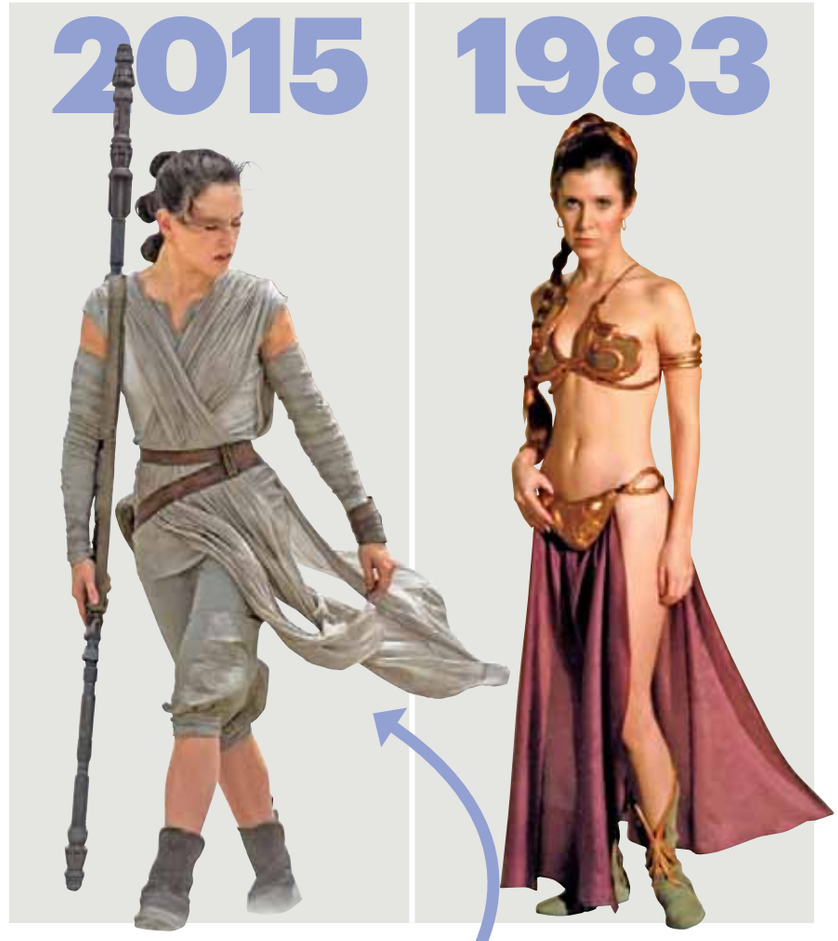
"It's interesting to see how those costumes not only create character, but they also reflect what's going on in the Star Wars movies in that time period."

A selection of designs from The Force Awakens are among the 70 costumes currently on display in the Smithsonian's exhibition at the Discovery Times Square centre in New York until Sept. 5, 2016.

Styles sported by newcomers Finn (John Boyega) and Rey (Daisy Ridley) are also featured alongside notable ensembles from the six previous films spanning from the 1977 debut to 2002's Attack of the Clones.

Toronto-based costume and set designer Sarah Armstrong said she's noted some parallels between the designs she's seen so far on Finn and Rey and those worn by their on-screen predecessors Han Solo and Leia (Harrison Ford and Carrie Fisher.)

They harken back to fashions from the original movies, which encompassed Asian-inspired designs with simple shapes alongside military-influenced styles, Armstrong said.



"I think it's incredible how the original designer (John Mollo) was able to blend and marry the Samurai with a modern warrior and build archetypes that have remained timeless," said Armstrong. "You can't ignore that. And there are very few films out there that have been able to do that.

"I think that's also one of the reasons it's been so successful because it's a unique thing on its own, and that's why it still retains its impact."

Among the most enduring costumes from the film franchise is its most revealing.

The gilded bikini worn on-screen by Fisher in 1983's Return of the Jedi has remained perennially popular — and parodied — ever since.

Comedian Amy Schumer struck a suggestive pose with C-3PO while dressed as Leia on the August cover of GQ. Montreal label UNTTLD was awarded a $15,000 prize in a Star Wars costume contest held during Toronto's World MasterCard Fashion Week in October with their interpretation of Leia's look.

"There's not a lot of embellishment... Without even seeing the movie, what that tells me is that the society is not doing that well.
Saul Drake, Smithsonian

Recent published reports suggested that Disney plans to retire the two-piece from use in product sales and marketing. Company representatives did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

"The fact that it it's a very male-centred world makes anything that Leia wore stand out," Armstrong said. "Leia's costumes are very (much) drawn on some of the male shapes but are very feminine."

Armstrong said the fashion formula established early in the Star Wars series was "incredibly successful" and it would be wise for those now steering the franchise not to veer too far off-course.

"They'll want to have something to appeal to the old fans, the people like me that saw it in '77, and they're going to want to appeal to a whole new generation of people. ... Once they've had success with this first one, you might see them try to take some more liberties."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Maya Rudolf is anti-social(media)

This photo shows John Leguizamo as Dave and Maya Rudolph as Brinda, in a scene from the film, Sisters, directed by Jason Moore. K.C. BAILEY/UNIVERSAL PICTURES VIA AP

Q & A

The SNL vet on Sisters and steering clear of social media

Ned Ehrbar
Metro | Hollywood

When SNL vet Maya Rudolph isn't busy being hilarious — like in the new comedy Sisters alongside Tina Fey and Amy Poehler — she's busy raising her four young children with her husband, filmmaker Paul Thomas Anderson. So it's understandable why she doesn't have much time for social media. But even if she did, she'd avoid it all the same.

Your character, Brinda, has a major chip on her shoulder from high school. How was it playing that kind of long-held resentment?
It is fun. I think the insecurity of Brinda's character really is our own collective insecurity. Everybody wants to be invited to the party. That's sort of the worst possible feeling in terms of high school days. You don't want to be the person that's left off the list. I feel like with Brinda it's almost as if she was just waiting for Kate (played by Fey) to come back to her hometown so she could be like, "See? I've really got my life together."

It's interesting how that FOMO (fear of missing out) turned her into a mean girl.
She has major FOMO. I just learned about FOMO. But everyone's got FOMO. Well, not everyone. Some people don't. Some people are actually content.

Twitter and Facebook have made it more pronounced.
Yes. I don't dabble in those things. Maybe I was just born so early in the '70s that it's just so hard for me to relate to the idea of sharing everything. When I do see other people's Instagrams or Twitter, it's such a carefully edited version of themselves, so everything looks f—ing great. Everything is perfect. Your life is perfect. But also I don't want anybody to know my business.

And it's a lot of work.
I feel like if I was constantly doing that and not doing the other things I need to do, I would hate myself a little bit. I don't have enough time to do the things I'm supposed to be doing, so it would just feel like pure procrastination.

Has anyone ever pressured you to do it for work?
Yes. When I did my variety show, I was given a Twitter account... And so I announced it, like, "Hey! My show's coming on. You should watch it." And the response was so crazy. I obviously had not set up my settings correctly, but people started responding and my phone would not stop. It felt weird.

That sounds terrifying.
It was. And I'm not used to it. I'm not good at it. I'm good at other things.

Such as?
Roller skating. But not ice skating. And I do not know how to rollerblade either.

How does this compare to crazy parties you've been to?
This is the craziest party. I mean, I did go to a lot of parties in high school. I grew up in L.A., and the thing to do was just go to random parties. You'd just go to somebody's house. It was so stupid, everything about it was dumb. The concept of it is just so screwed up. "Hey, there's a bunch of children in a home and the adults are gone and everyone's wasted!" That's a very, very dangerous, bad idea.

Do you think that new perspective has to do with being a grown-up and a parent?
That's the worst payback ever, actually having to think about that stuff. I don't have tattoos, but there was a time when I wanted one. And then my daughter, her cousin drew these dots on her face and I was like, "If you're going to get a tattoo you need to talk to me first. We need to have a conversation." What's happening to me? (laughs)

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TV BRIEF

Khloe Kardashian to help brokenhearted sculpt new bodies in TV series

Khloe Kardashian is behind a new makeover series at the E! network, where she promises to help the brokenhearted get the "ultimate payback."

E! said Wednesday it had approved a six-episode series where one of the network's favourite sisters will be mentor people trying to turn their life around.

She calls the series Revenge Body with Khloe Kardashian. Looking great, she says, is always the best revenge for getting back at an ex.

The network did not say when the show will be on the air. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

THE TV DINNER JESSICA ALLEN

My brother and I will be watching The Force Awakens wondering why no manufacturer ever released Aunt Beru's Blue Milk

Food doesn't factor large in that galaxy, far, far away. There's the scene on Tatooine where Luke drinks blue milk in his uncle and aunt's kitchen. There's the scene in the Mos Eisley cantina — a wretched hive of scum and villainy — where glowing cocktails are consumed. And there's the scene on Dagobah where Yoda breaks into Luke's kit rations and then Yoda cooks Luke a potent gruel in his hut.

Maybe that's because food is small potatoes compared to the sustenance of the Force. But that didn't stop my older brother from fashioning pieces of white, crustless Wonder bread into "space pellets."

Star Wars was the first movie that he ever saw in a cinema. It was the summer of 1977. My dad took him. He was 5. George Lucas' mythology and his characters, who lived long ago in those perfectly patinated worlds, made an impression on him that is still strong today.

By 1980, I was old enough to join in, much to my brother's inconvenience, to see The Empire Strikes Back, and Return of the Jedi, too, three years later. I remember the Star Wars bed sheets and matching drapes; pushing his patience while he watched his VHS copies of the trilogy while I played Barbies and recited the sacred script before the characters did; and choreographing scenes in the backyard where I insisted on being Han Solo because he had the best lines.

THE MOVIE: Star Wars series

THE MEMORY: Jessica and her brother

I remember taking photos of each other posing like Jedi Knights with our Polaroid cameras and then rotoscoping the lightsabers with magic markers; and saying, "May the Force be with you" in lieu of "Good night" after our parents tucked us in.

But here's the thing: his experience, ours, is not singular. Multiply it by many, many millions. This is why I can't wait to see the box office numbers this weekend after Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens opens on Dec. 18. The film's teasers and trailers have been viewed over 400 million times. I'm not sure there's ever been anything like it.

Much of the anticipation stems from our collective reverence for the material and fondness for its messages. Some people suggest that if you watch the original trilogy now, as an adult, you'll notice that Lucas didn't depart all that much in the three later prequels. It's just that his fan base had grown up and finally noticed how hokey his dialogue was.

I don't know about that. But I do know that our only hope is The Force Awakens' director J.J. Abrams, not to mention screenwriter Lawrence Kasdan, who penned both Empire and Jedi.

My brother bought our tickets — for me, him, our partners and my dad — in October. Only recently did we discover that our mother is having cataracts removed the same day. She knew how important the movie was and didn't want to be the cause of disrupting our plan. But Simon was adamant that he skip the movie to take her to and from the operation. Let that sit for a second: while my mother has surgery, her kids will be watching a movie — wondering why no manufacturer ever released Aunt Beru's Blue Milk — and a non-blood relation will tend to her.

"What is wrong with us?" My brother recently asked me.

"I have no idea," I said. As for Simon? The Force is strong with that one.

Jessica Allen is the digital correspondent on CTV's The Social.

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DOCUMENTARY

Film looks inside the best restaurant in the world

Steve Gow
For Metro Canada

The taste of success

The documentary Noma: My Perfect Storm, about the famous Copenhagen restaurant, is out on VOD today. CONTRIBUTED

Noma: My Perfect Storm may capture 33-months in the kitchen of Rene Redzepi's four-time winning Best Restaurant in the World, but Pierre Deschamps actually never set out to make a movie about food.

"The first goal was to focus on Redzepi," admitted the filmmaker ahead of the documentary's release in select theatres and on VOD.

"The backdrop is Noma. I didn't want to go too much into the making of the food itself because we have TV shows and they do that all the time. I was really trying to tell the story of a person in a specific context and what that person achieved."

Redzepi's accomplishments are certainly worth attention. The young Danish chef has not only run world-renowned Noma, a restaurant in Copenhagen, he also invented New Nordic Cuisine — an artistic, locally-based gastronomy that relies heavily on seasonal ingredients and foraging. Perhaps more importantly, Deschamps explores how an ostracized Muslim youth battled racism and still seemingly suffers the insecurity of being an outsider — even as he runs the Best Restaurant in the World.

"I knew he has issues with racism (and) I knew with Noma, he was trying to do something different. The sum of those factors made him who he became," said Deschamps. "When you look at Redzepi's story, it's a guy who climbed the ladder of success within a few years to become the God of Food — people will be surprised looking at the ups and downs."

Moviegoers will also see behind the curtain of one of the most celebrated kitchens on the planet. There may be scenes of Redzepi rejoicing his apprentices' gastronomic experimentations, but they're equally balanced by brazen sequences of the famous chef emotional and unhinged.

"He knows me a bit — who I am and my philosophy about life. And he knows I wasn't going to dig into private stuff," admitted Deschamps about capturing such intimate moments on-screen. But the filmmaker is also quick to credit Danish culture's broad respect for "tall poppy syndrome" for Redzepi's modesty as well.

"You need to make sure you respect everyone and you shouldn't think of yourself too much," explained Deschamps. "I think Rene has kept that sort of humility."

"It's a guy who climbed the ladder of success within a few years to become the God of Food"

Pierre Deschamps on Rene Redzepi

MORE EATS

Top three restaurants in Canada:

Toque! – Montreal
This fun Montreal restaurant has focused on local ingredients for an inventive menu made of gastronomic delights like pan-seared foie gras and venison loin.

Hawksworth Restaurant – Vancouver
With its elegant interior, the décor of Hawksworth is as swanky as its French and West Coast-influenced cuisine, which ranges from entrees like parmesan-crusted chicken to grilled sturgeon with squid ink risotto.

Buca – Toronto
An Italian spin on fine-dining, executive chef Rob Gentile serves up such fare as hand-rolled ricotta gnocchi or crispy pigs' ears with fennel. Even famed chef Jamie Oliver once tweeted his "favourite meal of the year" was at this upscale alleyway eatery.

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4 CLASSIC MUST-WATCH CHRISTMAS SPECIALS

Brian Gasparek
For Metro Canada

If you haven't had a chance to kick back with a glass of spiked eggnog and stream Bill Murray's new holiday Netflix special, A Very Murray Christmas, you're totally missing out.

The show is not only as captivatingly bonkers as you would expect from a Bill Murray and friends holiday extravaganza, it also pays a great homage to all of the classic Christmas variety specials from television's past. Especially the really weird ones.

Dating back to the late '50s, celebrity-hosted Christmas specials were a huge draw on TV every winter. They featured singing, dancing, lovable guest stars, and some questionably thin holiday-themed plotlines. The popularity of these specials lasted several decades, and a handful of them still remain notorious today.

Whether it's because of their festive nostalgia, their utter ridiculousness or their disastrous legacy, here are four classic Christmas TV specials that you really need to go back and watch.

1 Pee-wee's Playhouse Christmas Special

Pee-Wee Herman's Christmas special from 1988 is an absolute must watch. The show combines the nostalgic singing and dancing from classic '60s holiday specials with the weekly weirdness that was Pee-wee's Playhouse. Along with Herman himself, the special features all of Pee-wee's bizarre Playhouse friends like Chairy, Cowboy Curtis and Charo. The strange cast interacts and performs with a solid line-up of '80s special guests that include Cher, Magic Johnson, Glen Close, Whoopi Goldberg and Oprah. The special is available on Netflix and should appeal to children, adults and stoners alike.

2 The Judy Garland Christmas Show

In the early '60s, The Judy Garland Christmas Show aired as a sweet, wholesome variety special that was fit for the entire family. But if you watch it now, it will completely floor you. The special, which took place just a few years before Garland died from a barbiturate overdose, was entirely sponsored by a pharmaceutical company! It features a visibly troubled-looking Garland, hosting a Christmas celebration with her children and guests at their faux home. It includes a plethora of uncomfortable moments, like the suggestive duet performed by Garland's young daughter Liza Minnelli and her boyfriend Tracy Everitt, Everitt's bizarre crotch-accentuating sweater and a couple different Santa visits that feel more like home invasions. The special is available on YouTube. It's crazy.

3 Andy Williams and the NBC Kids Search for Santa

Speaking of baffling, the premise of Moon River singer Andy Williams' 1985 Christmas special was so unbelievably offside, it would never air today. The show features a 58-year-old Williams convincing several child actors from popular NBC sitcoms like The Cosby Show and Punky Brewster to run away with him. He takes the kids to Finland, where they proceed to spend time in a secluded cabin in the woods, all in an effort to track down Santa Claus. No, really. The singing and dancing displayed by the children is almost as frightening as the plotline. A young Joey Lawrence's performance is exceptionally awful. You can watch clips from the show on YouTube.

4 The Star Wars Holiday Special

All of the hype surrounding The Force Awakens this month reminded us of the most ridiculous, must-see Christmas special of all time, The Star Wars Holiday Special from 1978. Yes, this actually exists and it's beyond weird. Although this special is more plot-driven than the others we mentioned, it's still intended to be a wholesome family variety show, and features singing, comedy and celebrity guests. The special revolves around a disgruntled-looking Star Wars cast attempting to get Chewbacca home to his family in time to celebrate 'Life Day.' Bea Arthur, Art Carney, Jefferson Starship and other guest stars all make very confusing appearances in what was a blatant Star Wars cash-grab. It's so much of a mess that even George Lucas says he hates it! Look it up on YouTube.

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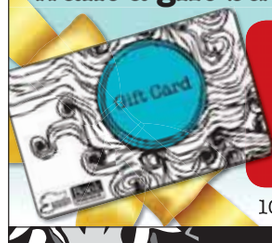

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Now playing

DRAMA/COMEDY

Sisters

Director: Jason Moore
Starring: Tina Fey, Amy Poehler

Two disconnected sisters are summoned home to clean out their childhood bedroom before their parents sell the family house. Looking to recapture their glory days, they throw one final high-school-style party for their classmates,

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE
Critics: 89% Audience: 96%

DOCUMENTARY

Peggy Guggenheim: Art Addict

Director: Lisa Immordino Vreeland

This documentary is a portrait of a patron of the arts extraordinaire who transformed a modest fortune into one of the premiere collections of twentieth century modern art.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE
Critics: 90% Audience: 89%

ANIMATION/KIDS

Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Road Chip

Director: Walt Becker
Starring: Justin Long, Matthew Gray Gubler

Through a series of misunderstandings, Alvin, Simon and Theodore come to believe that Dave is going to propose to his new girlfriend in New York City... and dump them.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE
Critics: 8% Audience: 82%

COMEDY

Youth

Director: Paolo Sorrentino
Starring: Michael Caine, Harvey Keitel

Youth is about two longtime friends vacationing in the Swiss Alps. Oscar winning actor Michael Caine plays Fred, an acclaimed composer and conductor, who brings along his daughter (Rachel Weisz) and best friend Mick (Harvey Keitel), a renowned filmmaker.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE
Critics: 72% Audience: 76%

ACTION & ADVENTURE

Star Wars: The Force Awakens

Director: J.J. Abrams
Starring: Harrison Ford, Daisy Ridley

In this continuation of the Star Wars saga, balance returns to the Force as the First Order, emerging from the ashes of the Empire, clashes with the Resistance, which includes newcomers and heroes from the former Rebel Alliance.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE
Critics: 94% Audience: 99%

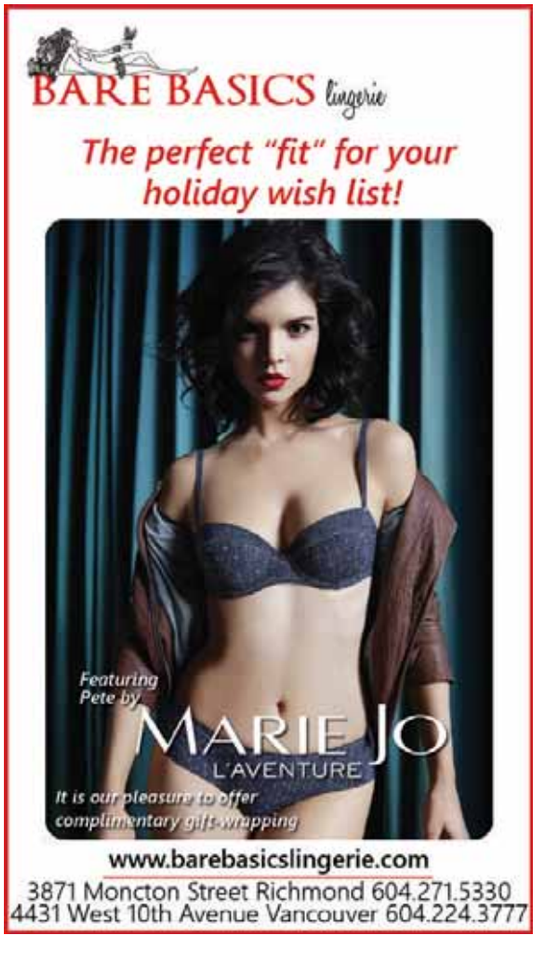
DRAMA

The Danish Girl

Director: Tom Hooper
Starring: Alicia Vikander, Eddie Redmayne

The remarkable love story inspired by the lives of artists Lili Elbe and Gerda Wegener. Lili and Gerda's marriage and work evolve as they navigate Lili's groundbreaking journey as a transgender pioneer.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE
Critics: 71% Audience: 72%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Hawke's rules for a knight

INTERVIEW

Actor says he drew on many sources for stories' wisdom

Actor-author Ethan Hawke took on modern-day parenting challenges with the help of a fictitious 15th-century Cornish knight.

His young adult book, Rules for a Knight, grew from Hawke's "tinkering" with stories he had written over the years for his own kids. The parables take the form of a letter from the knight, introduced as Hawke's ancestor, to his four children about living purposeful, ethical lives as he prepares to go into battle.

"It's a dialogue about some entry-level philosophical ideas that I think could be nice for young people," Hawke, 45, said.

They're warm and simply, yet effectively, written, although Hawke insists: "I have no ownership over any of these stories . . . I really view myself as the editor of this; anything that's valuable in this didn't come from me."

The handsome, palm-sized book is bound in emerald cloth and each chapter features whimsical pencil drawings done by his wife, Ryan Hawke.

Each chapter explores one of 20 virtues by telling a parable, sharing what the knight learned as he grew from a young apprentice into adulthood.

The stories are based on wisdom from "other knights" Hawke credits in the back of the book — among them Muhammad Ali, Vince Lombardi, Eleanor Roosevelt, Boyhood and Before Sunrise trilogy director Richard Linklater and late actor River Phoenix.

Like the knight in the book, Hawke has four children: daughter Maya, 17, and son Levon, 13, with ex-wife Uma Thurman and daughters Clementine, 7, and 4-year-old Indiana with wife Ryan Hawke.

He liked to use these stories to spark conversations with his kids about rules and behaviours.

"They're hard conversations to have, and part of it for me, doing a lot of my parenting from the handicapped vantage point of a divorcee . . . I'd be apart from the kids," Hawke explained.

"I have them every other weekend and there are all these things I wanted to talk about and they never come up on their own."

Establishing clarity and consistency around basic rules means less confusion for his children. But kids also ask "why?"

And Hawke used the knight's stories to provide real-life examples about difficult-to-define qualities such as humility and grace.

"That's what it was for me and that's the reason to publish it," Hawke explained.

"I'm an actor. I don't have to have a real job and this is something I can do with my time that's been fun over the past 10 years or so."

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Ethan Hawke says Rules for a Knight came about through tinkering with stories he wrote for his kids. HANDOUT

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Stars on Star Wars

Amidst all the excitement surrounding the seventh and final installment of the Star Wars franchise, Carrie Fisher admits her greatest fears about returning to set. CONTRIBUTED

J.J. Abrams (Director)

Coming on board: "This is a project that I felt incredibly lucky to be asked to be a part of. I think I speak for all of us, except for maybe Harrison, when I say this was not a job," he says before laughing. "I'm kidding, Harrison was unbelievable. But the process of this movie — to a person on the crew, to a person on the cast — this was not a job. This was nothing that I think any one of us took on because it was a gig that was available. It was something that felt like a true passion."

The guiding principle: "At the very beginning, it was about knowing why we were telling this story, and it was to give people that sense of possibility and magic that we all felt when we first saw the original Star Wars movies," he explains. "It's not a nostalgia trip. We had to go backwards in order to go forwards."

His worst day at work: "The scariest day, for me, was when Harrison Ford was injured, which is just absolutely hideous," Abrams remembers. "But every day felt like there were challenges, because I knew how important this was to so many people. That was never a presence that went away."

Carrie Fisher (General Leia Organa)

Biggest fears going into the new movie: "Bad memory. Not remembering my lines. That was scary," the outspoken Fisher says. "I'm the custodian of Princess Leia, so I never got out of character, and I wondered if that would be noticed. No, I was very nervous. It's been 40 years. It's been a long time. I don't like looking at myself at this age in a large way, so that was scary, and remains so."

Fastest to set: "How long did it take to get into costume? About 10 minutes. I'm older, I do it faster," she says with a laugh. "No, really, 20 minutes. I have a kind of classy gas station attendant look (in this movie). Or I would say I was an airplane repair mechanic, with a nice vest over that. And different hair than most airplane mechanics would normally have."

"I'm the custodian of Princess Leia... I was very nervous. It's been 40 years. It's been a long time.

Harrison Ford (Han Solo)

Coming back: "It's always nice to anticipate working on something that you know people will have an appetite for. This is not a crap shoot. This is a big casino, and it's fun to play with these toys again," Ford says of returning to the franchise. "It seemed easy to come back to the character. Clothes make the man. I've walked more than a mile in those boots. I was interested in the described path of the character. I thought there was an interesting bit of business for the character to do."

Helping the kids: "I'm not going to tell them how to navigate this very personal space of trying to figure out the careers that they've chosen for themselves," Ford says of John Boyega, Daisy Ridley and Oscar Isaac. "It's bizarrely individual how you navigate the space between where they're at now and the rest of your useful professional life. But they're in for a big ride, and they know it, I think."

Tough crowd at home: "My kids do not think I'm cool at all," Ford says with a laugh. "Being in this movie is not going to convince them otherwise. They're just glad to see that Dad is still working."

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6 GIFTS FOR THE MUSIC NERD ON YOUR LIST

With a week to go before Christmas, we're in the Red Zone when it comes to panic shopping. What to buy the music fan/musician who has everything? Fear not because Alan Cross is here to offer gift suggestions for all budgets. **ALAN CROSS/METRO**

1 Cufflinks

OK, so cufflinks aren't as popular as they once were, but for $13.50 US, I found a pair on Etsy that looks like tiny vinyl records.
Website: etsy.com/shop/monedus

2 Album Artwork Blanket

Society6 has a nice selection of throws depicting blown-up versions of classic albums. I'm stuck between one based on My Bloody Valentine's Loveless and another of Unknown Pleasures from Joy Division. For $49 US, you could opt for both.
Website: society6.com/throw-blankets

3 Blood-spitting KISS doll

While KISS action figures date back to the '70s, the new 2015 edition of the Gene doll comes with "BLOOD SPITTING ACTION." It can be yours for $69.99 US from Figures Toy Company.
Website: figurestoycompany.com

4 Jack White's turntable for kids

You can bestow the pleasure of vinyl on your kids with a bright yellow portable turntable from Jack White's Third Man Records. Officially called Manny's Children's Turntable, it plays albums, 45s and 78s and comes with a USB port for converting vinyl into MP3s. A steal at $89.95 US.
Website: thirdmanstore.com

5 Music-themed toilet seats

Jammin' Johns, a company that promises "music to your rear," offers a selection of toilet seats with lids shaped like an acoustic guitar, a grand piano or the backside of a Fender Strat. You can view them all in the company's Throne Room (seriously). Expect to spend at least $200 US.
Website: jamminjohns.com

6 Sennheiser Orpheus Headphones

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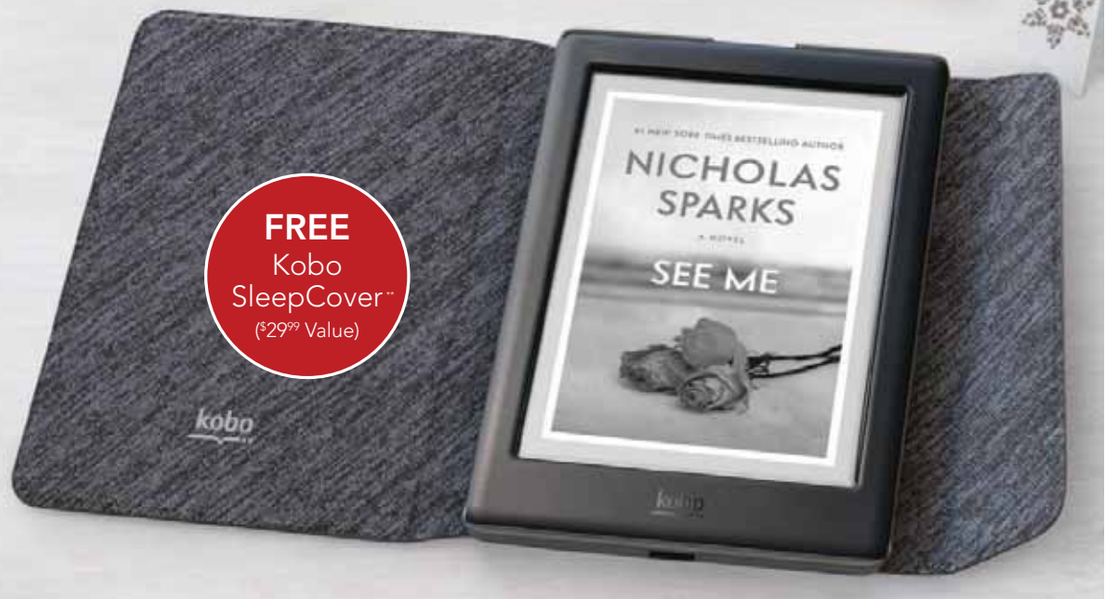

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Get the most at the last minute

Last-minute holiday shopping can be overwhelming, so experts say it's important to remain thoughtful and find those rare times when malls aren't too crowded. ISTOCK

SHOPPING

It's not too late to find great Christmas gifts

Astrid Van Den Broek

Of course. You waited too long to snag that Dr. Who Tardis adult onesie and now they're all sold out. Now what are you going to get your sister? And when are you going to tackle the rest of your Christmas shopping?

Not to worry — we asked these top shopping bloggers for their best tips on approaching the last-minute Christmas shop.

Stay cool

"Christmas shopping can get overwhelming, especially if you've left it late, so take a minute first to really think of creative or thoughtful gifts to give your loved ones," says Tiffany Anthonia, the blogger behind shopaholicoverhere.blogspot.com.

Plan your shopping

Write down your list of who to shop for and check it twice. "And try to shop at stores that have a variety of product categories to save time when you have an entire list to shop for," adds Anthonia. If you can, also opt for low-traffic shopping times — think during the week as soon as the mall or stores open rather than wading into after-work, rush-hour shopping.

Set your limits

"I'm a fan of the 'do it all at once' approach," says Anne Keery, of UniqueGifter.com. "But if this is a source of stress, give yourself reasonable constraints, like 'Everything needs to come from this mall in the next three hours.' Setting boundaries for yourself can make things a lot less worrisome."

Make alternative arrangements

Your "it" item is out of stock online? "If the retailer has a brick-and-mortar location, see if the item is available in-store because most major retailers like Best Buy, Toys "R" Us and Walmart offer free in-store pickup.

> **"Don't grab the first thing you see just because you're on a time crunch."**
> Tiffany Anthonia
> Shopping Blogger

This way you can buy the item online, then get an email within an hour or two when it's ready to be picked up in-store," says Kyle James, founder of rather-be-shopping.com.

Get creative

Or try posting a "Wanted" ad for your must-have item on classified sites such as Craigslist and Kijiji, and also check eBay.

"Alternatively, give a card with the name of the gift and a future delivery date," says Keery.

Or use that gift idea as inspiration. "At least you know what gift direction you wanted to go, so find a gift that's either similar or complementary of that gift you had in mind," says Anthonia. "You might come across an even better gift."

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Light up the eyes of gamers

Marc Saltzman

Nintendo's Yoshi's Woolly World

Star Wars Battlefront

Bethesda Softworks' Fallout 4

'Tis the season to be jolly, and what better way to keep the kids — and kids at heart — happy than with a brand new video game.

If it's console and computer gamers you're shopping for, the following are some thumb-numbing suggestions. Prices are generally $49.99 to $74.99, depending on the platform. Be sure to check the ESRB age-rating in the corner of the box before buying.

Kids

Most games let you play content created by other people, but Nintendo's Super Mario Maker (for Nintendo Wii U) also lets you design, create and share your very own Super Mario adventures. Along with the 60-odd playable Nintendo-made levels, the game includes tools to make two-dimensional platforming levels based on previous Super Mario games.

As you might suspect, you'll mostly run from the left side of the screen to the right, leap across platforms, break open power-ups, climb into pipes, and jump on enemies to destroy them. After you've designed a world, play it through, hand the controller to a sibling or friend, or upload to the online community. You can download other creations, too.

One of the world's hottest kids' franchises is getting a reboot. Activision's Skylanders SuperChargers (for multiple platforms) once again fuses action figures with a video game — the toys come alive on the television screen when placed on the Portal of Power, which is connected to the console — but now there's collectible vehicles added to the mix. Players can tackle missions by land, sea and air, in a number of customizable and upgradeable vehicles, including cars, motorcycles, boats, tanks, helicopters and submarines. The game also introduces 20 new Skylanders characters, but parents will be relieved to learn the game also supports all existing Skylanders characters.

Other kids' games that won't disappoint: Nintendo's Yoshi's Woolly World, Disney's Disney Infinity 3.0, WB Games' LEGO: Dimensions, and Sony's Tearaway Unfolded.

Teens

Launching just ahead of the film Star Wars: Episode VII — The Force Awakens, Star Wars Battlefront from DICE and Electronic Arts (PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Windows PC) drops players into intense intergalactic battles based in iconic Star Wars locations — such as the snowy planet of Hoth – pitting Rebel forces against the Empire.

Along with playing as characters based on the original movie trilogy, you'll pilot beloved vehicles, as well, ranging from AT-ATs and TIE fighters to speeder bikes and even the Millennium Falcon. The game includes many online multiplayer modes and mission types for dozens of simultaneous players.

Guitar Hero is back after a five-year hiatus and it's nothing short of ambitious. Along with single-player and local multiplayer options, Activision's Guitar Hero Live (for multiple platforms) introduces a mode called GHTV, an always-on 24-hour music video network that lets you log on, strap in and strum to a continually updated collection of music videos and concert footage. That is — instead of the cartoon-like animated bands from previous games — you can rock out to your favourite artists and discover new music, while challenging others for high score.

Other recommended games for teens: Sony's Uncharted: The Nathan Drake Collection, EA Sports' NHL 16, and Activision's Destiny: The Taken King.

Adults

One of the most buzzed about games of the year, Bethesda Softworks' Fallout 4 (Xbox One, PlayStation 4, Windows PC), is the long-awaited return to the beloved single-player, open-world, role-playing game series. The follow-up to 2008's Fallout 3 lets you choose to play as a male or female and select a specific set of skills, and then venture out of a vault 200 years after an apocalyptic event. Played from a first- or third-person perspective, you can freely roam around huge environments, interface with memorable characters and gain access to more than 50 base weapons and more than 700 modifications. Plus, gamers can take advantage of a deep crafting system to create unique adventures.

The next installment of the legendary sci-fi shooter franchise, Halo 5: Guardians, is the built to showcase the power of Xbox One. Complementing its intense storyline — which can be run with three friends in a cooperative (co-op) mode — this new game focuses heavily on competitive multiplayer. One mode called Warzone challenges up to 24 players to battle on the biggest maps in Halo to date, while taking on multiple objectives including big boss battles, with land and air craft to aid in the fight.

Other worthy games for adults: Ubisoft's Assassin's Creed: Syndicate, CD Projekt Red's The Witcher 3: Witch Hunt, Activision's Call of Duty: Black Ops III, Microsoft Studios/Crystal Dynamics' Rise of the Tomb Raider, and Konami's Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain.

Consoles that make the gift list

Mike Yawney

It doesn't matter how young or old you are; video games continue to be a dominant pastime. While no new gaming consoles launched this year, some unique limited edition bundles did surface.

Here are the top picks for those looking to surprise a gamer on their gift list.

Star Wars Battlefront PlayStation 4 Console - $469.99

The ultimate PlayStation bundle for any Star Wars fan, this unique console bears the image of Darth Vader's mask, while the DualShock wireless controller is designed after his chest panel.

Not only does this come with the highly anticipated Star Wars Battlefront game, it also includes four additional classic Star Wars games to keep even the best gamers busy over the holidays.

Xbox One Limited Edition Halo 5: Guardians Console - $549

There is no denying the Halo franchise is a force to be reckoned with, so it comes as no surprise Microsoft is releasing this limited edition Xbox One console for the holidays.

The design of the console itself is inspired by Spartan technology and has a massive 1 TB hard drive to store your games and media.

The wireless controller also sees a redesign with a new 3.5-mm headset jack. Other bonus items include a Spartan-themed SteelBook case with Halo 5: Guardians Limited Edition full game download, a Guardian model and exclusive downloadable content.

New Nintendo 3DS XL - $229.99

Nintendo's latest handheld console features not only a larger screen for more immersive gameplay, but new technology. Super stable 3D allows for a better experience and wider range of viewing angles. The handheld device also features built-in NFC functionality for communication with Nintendo's new Amiibo figures.

HP Pavilion Gaming Notebook - $899 and up

This surprisingly affordable, stylish laptop was designed with the gamer in mind. Armed with a quad-core processor and powerful graphics card, the latest laptop from HP can play the latest PC titles with ease. Since sound can play a huge role in games, HP teamed up with Bang & Olufsen to create an immersive audio experience. Even the webcam has been enhanced with Intel Real-Sense to allow for facial recognition, 3D scanning and motion controls. Xbox owners will also be able to connect to the Xbox community and games thanks to Windows 10.

RetroN 5 - $169.99

A single-game console with enhanced resolution and improved sound, RetroN 5 can host games from 10 different systems supporting NES, Famicom, SNES, Super Famicom, Genesis, Mega Drive, Game Boy, Game Boy Colour and Game Boy Advance.

And the best part? You can save games on the fly, so even those most brutally challenging become manageable. Gamers must have the original cartridges in or to play games.

iPod Touch - $249 and up

With access to thousands of games, Apple's iPod Touch has quickly become a favourite for those who love to play on the go.

The latest iPod Touch has a significantly improved processor, which can play the latest downloadable games from the App Store. Gaming is only part of the package; with a terrific camera and access to apps, you can use the iPod Touch to do just about anything.

1 Xbox One Limited Edition Halo 5: Guardians Console, $549
2 New Nintendo 3DS XL, $229.99
3 Star Wars Battlefront PlayStation 4 Console, $469.99
4 RetroN 5 - $169.99
5 iPod Touch - $249 and up
6 HP Pavilion Gaming Notebook - $899 and up

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Give the gift of giving to others

Ylva Van Buuren

Could there be anything more satisfying than finding the perfect gift for those you love? Absolutely! Knowing that the gifts are doing good for others, too. Here are some gift ideas that keep on giving.

Agriculture Pack

A World Vision Agriculture Pack provides seeds, animal feed, tools, training and emergency food to families in need. It costs $35, but partnerships with the Canadian government and various companies and agencies double the value to $70. Visit worldvision.ca/gifts.

Charity Gift Cards

When you wrap up a CanadaHelps gift card, the recipient gets to choose which charity to support. There are more than 86,000 registered charities with CanadaHelps ranging from local health and arts and culture to environmental and social services charities. Gift cards start at $5. Visit canadahelps.org.

Help Syrian Refugees

There are many ways to help a Syrian family coming to Canada. Check in your community to see if a family is being sponsored, make a donation or volunteer your time or services. There is also the Syria Emergency Relief Fund. Visit charityintelligence.ca/syrian-refugees.

TOMS Slippers

Women's White Gold Boucle Slippers are a perfect holiday gift. Plus, for every pair of TOMS shoes you buy, the company provides a new pair of shoes to children in need. To date, the company has given more than 45 million new pairs of shoes to children around the world. $55/pair. Visit toms.ca or select retailers across Canada.

Shop for Hope

From the exclusive Shop for Hope collection at Winners and HomeSense, the net proceeds from the sale of the Plush Owl go to the Canadian Women's Foundation. $14.99/each. Available at Winners, winners.ca and HomeSense, homesense.ca.

Gift with a Gift

Choose a gift at Indigo such as the Fair Isle Socks with Faux-Sherpa Lining, and keep the gift going by donating to the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation at the cashier. The charity puts books into the hands of high-needs elementary school children. $34.50/pair. Visit chapters.indigo.ca.

Help Free the Children

All artisans gifts purchased from Me to We help Free the Children communities overseas. A Ghanaian Brass Halo Necklace, for example, gives a woman access to a prenatal workshop. A Rafiki, made with colourful glass beads threaded onto a stretchy 48-inch cord and worn as a bracelet, necklace, etc., helps educate a child for one year. Necklace, $32, Rafiki, $10. Visit shop.metowe.com.

Angels for Angels

Goods sold by Ten Thousand Villages are made by artisans in marginalized communities around the world, and every purchase helps those communities. At the same time, $2 from every purchase of the handcrafted Capiz Angel ornament from the Philippines will help fund Breakfast for Learning, the first national charity focused on nourishing Canadian children. Ornament, $20. Visit tenthousandvillages.ca or select retailers across Canada.

Help At-Risk Youth

Until Dec. 31, $5 from the sale of every Samsung Galaxy Grand Prime purchased from Virgin Mobile will go towards the company's RE*Generation program that helps connect at-risk and homeless youth with training, skills and opportunities for employment.

The slim-line phone with 1.2 GHz Quad Core processor, long-lasting battery and 5 MP camera is $249 (price varies depending on the plan). Purchase it at Virgin Mobile retail and virginmobile.ca. Virgin Mobile members can also participate by adding 'Change for a Dollar' to their monthly phone bill to donate $1/month to the cause. Members and Canadians can also text the word REGEN to 30333 to donate $5 to the RE*Generation program.

LA-RS Bracelets

Modeled after the Cartier love bracelets, these ONEXONE bracelets benefit the onexone.org charity and help feed children a healthy meal. Each set comes with four colours to represent various human races.

Join celebrities Chandler Parsons, Rita Ora, Diplo, Marcus Stroman, Hailey Baldwin and others... and try them on for size. $30. Visit la-rs.org.

Help WWF

Adopt a Spirit Bear for $40 and help the World Wide Fund for Nature protect the species. You'll receive a kit containing a plush bear, adoption certificate, poster and reusable WWF tote bag.

There are more than 30 different species to choose from. Visit shop.wwf.ca.

1 World Vision Agriculture Pack, $35
2 Ten Thousand Villages Capiz Angel ornament, $20
3 TOMS White Gold Boucle Slippers, $55
4 Indigo Fair Isle Socks, $34.50
5 Me to We Rafiki, $10
6 World Wide Fund for Nature Spirit Bear, $40

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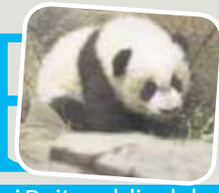

Smithsonian National Zoo readies for baby panda Bei Bei's public debut

A cultural getaway to Montreal

The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts is putting the spotlight on the Beaver Hall Group, a female artist ensemble based in the city in the 1920s. KATHY BUCKWORTH/FOR METRO

IN 48 HOURS

Art, history and French-inspired flavours await in dynamic city

Kathy Buckworth
For Metro Canada

Montreal has an international reputation for fabulous cuisine, fantastic shopping and fine arts. You only need spend 48 hours to get a taste of this trendy and growing city, which has rightfully earned a UNESCO City of Design designation.

Day 1

In the heart of the city you'll find the Golden Square Mile, running from Avenue Atwater to rue Saint-Denis, world-famous for its concentration of art boutiques. Start your day with the city's best-known "power breakfast" hot spot, Le Renoir at the Sofitel Hotel. Walk a few scenic blocks down the street to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. The wonderfully curated "Colours of Jazz" exhibition runs until Jan. 31, featuring the unique brushstrokes of the predominantly female artist ensemble the Beaver Hall Group, who painted in a Modernist style in the 1920s.

Lunch at the café at the museum is both French and modern fusion inspired; blood pudding, Moroccan octopus and seasonal fare are just some of the elegantly plated feature dishes. Save room for the exotic assortment of desserts.

Le Renoir restaurant at the Sofitel Hotel. SOFITEL PR

Put your power shoes on to head out for an afternoon of shopping at some of the country's most exclusive shops, including Tiffany's, Gucci, Escada, and Montreal's own favourite department store, Simons.

Unload your shopping and head into Le Bar, a hopping bistro that attracts both young millennials and senior executives, featuring a line of apple-based Neige cider drinks and an eclectic bar menu, showcasing their famous charcuterie board and tasty local Quebec cheeses.

Day 2

Stop for a croissant at one of the many aromatic bistros and bakeries on rue Sainte-Catherine, before heading for your next museum hit at the McCord Museum, which specializes in the preservation of Canadian history, as well as offering fun and educational children's programming. Want to feel like a lady who lunches? Be one by dropping into the Holt Renfrew lunchroom, and linger over a drink before planning your next shopping move.

Relax in your room at the Sofitel and order an in-room spa treatment, or if you're looking for a true rural Quebec experience in the midst of your urban visit, head to La Face Cachée de la Pomme, an hour outside of Montreal, and the birthplace of ice cider. Extreme cold temperatures allow for the creation of this unique drink experience, and exemplifies what they call "Quebec culture in a bottle." Tours are available and their foie gras, made with ice cider, is a particular treat, perfect for the end of an artisanal- and action-packed two days.

Kathy Buckworth was a guest of the Sofitel Hotel, Montreal.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

'Tis the season... to snorkel with seals on Snake Island

Snorkelling with harbour seals may seem like an unlikely Canadian wintertime activity, but tourism officials in Nanaimo say it's definitely doable.

A local dive company, Sundown Diving, takes visitors to Snake Island for the experience, providing the necessary equipment such as wetsuit, gloves, mask and snorkel. The island is a 15-minute boat ride from Nanaimo off the east coast of Vancouver Island.

Company owner Ed Singer says there are way fewer tourists on his $100-per-person tours now than in the summer, and the water is certainly chillier, but there is more to see.

"The water is clearer at this time of year. You're seeing more marine life, and you can see the seals swimming around under the water at a distance," Singer said.

"In the summer or spring when the visibility might be poor, often you're just seeing the seals coming close to you when their heads are above water."

He said his guests spend about 45 minutes in the water now, somewhat less than in the summer. No special skills are required.

"They don't have to be great swimmers because the suit is very buoyant, so they're gonna float for sure."

Not just a summer destination

Tourism Nanaimo wants potential visitors to know that the city is not just a summertime destination. It says year-round experiences include:

• The self-guided Nanaimo Bar Trail, along which you can taste variations of the sweet treat. The 2015 Nanaimo Bar Trail brochure has 34 stops.

• Culinary tours, which also drop in on breweries and wineries. Operators include Vancouver Island Expeditions, Tracks Outdoor Adventures and Harbour City Transportation.

• The Nanaimo Museum, where permanent exhibits include a replica coal mine shaft. In December the museum is presenting "Christmas in the Golden Age of Radio," featuring its radio collection.

• The Cedar Yellow Point Artisan Trail, highlighting artists who craft one-of-a-kind items.

• Gabriola Island, a short ferry ride away. Besides arts and dining options on the island, there are also Christmas craft fairs.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

3 WAYS TO RING IN THE NEW YEAR AROUND THE WORLD

Not many days from now, the planet will bid farewell to 2015 and welcome 2016 with open arms. We're taking a world tour of the big cities where New Year's is a major cause for celebration. Let's take a look at what's planned in London, New York and Rio de Janeiro. **AFP**

BEN STANSALL/AFP

1 London, U.K.

The U.K. capital celebrates New Year's on the banks of the River Thames, opposite the Palace of Westminster. Unfortunately, since 2014 visitors need a ticket to watch the spectacular fireworks show above Big Ben, a decision taken last year to ensure spectator safety. All the tickets have now been snapped up. The show begins at 5 p.m. and ends at 2 a.m.

The place to be: London Eye, The Queen's Walk

Watch it at home: Those unable to get a ticket will be able to watch the show on the BBC One TV channel, which broadcasts it live.

>> london.gov.uk

JEWEL SAMAD/AFP

2 New York, U.S.A.

The Big Apple is a must-do for those who want to celebrate 2016 in style. The entertainment is concentrated in Times Square where all the famous brightly lit billboards form part of the event. The lineup of performers this year include Carrie Underwood, Demi Lovato, Luke Bryan, and Wiz Khalifa with Charlie Puth.

The place to be: Times Square

Practical tips: It's better to arrive early to be sure to get a place and see the Times Square ball drop. It's advisable to take Sixth or Eighth Avenues to get to Times Square. The police close the adjacent roads.

>> timessquarenyc.org

GUSTAVO PELLIZZON/AG/AFP

3 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

New Year's in Rio is the second-biggest popular event in the city, after its mythical carnival. More than two million people attend. There's a firework display at midnight that lasts for around 20 minutes. This year the display and soundtrack will be themed around the Olympics, set to take place in August 2016 in the city.

The place to be: Copacabana Beach

Safety precautions: It's better to wear shoes rather than sandals. As the celebrations take place on the beach and champagne will be flowing, there could be fragments of glass in the sand.

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Local cuisine makes travel memorable

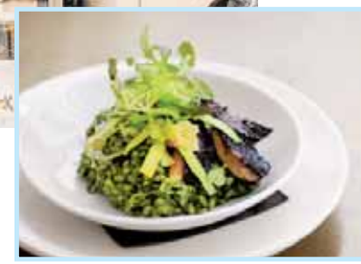
ON THE MOVE

From London to Peru, best cities for meals that excite

Loren Christie
For Metro Canada

According to Christine Couvelier, a culinary consultant who watches global food trends, the best travel memoirs always include food memories.

I recently asked her about Travelocity.ca's list of the hottest destinations in culinary tourism and why these cities made the cut.



The Farmshop bakery in L.A., and, at right, a dish at Nopi in London. SPENCER LOWELL; INSET: CONTRIBUTED

Montreal, Canada

This fabulous food city focuses on tradition and pride. Head to Schwartz's, offering the best smoked meat since 1928.

Visit the Atwater market where there is a store with more than 800 varieties of cheese. The Montreal bagels are hand-rolled, dipped in honey water and baked in a wood-fired oven. You can wander around in there for a whole afternoon.

Los Angeles, U.S.A.

One of the things happening in L.A. is the rising popularity of communal dining. A table or two offering a communal dining experience is becoming part of many destination restaurants.

Farmshop Santa Monica is a great spot to make some new foodie friends. Picture sharing a meal at a big wooden table in the middle of the restaurant surrounded by shelves stacked with gourmet food products.

Chicago, U.S.A.

With such a wide range of ethnicities represented in this city, dining in Chicago is a marathon, not a sprint. The food community in this city is focusing on the combinations of sweet and heat. Head to Topolobampo with Chef Rick Bayless, the leading Mexican chef in all of North America. Have the achiote-marinated suckling pig, it's wrapped in banana leaves. I love the poached papaya on the side.

London, England

One of the biggest trends is vegetables as the star of the plate and there is no better place than London, England, to really taste this trend.

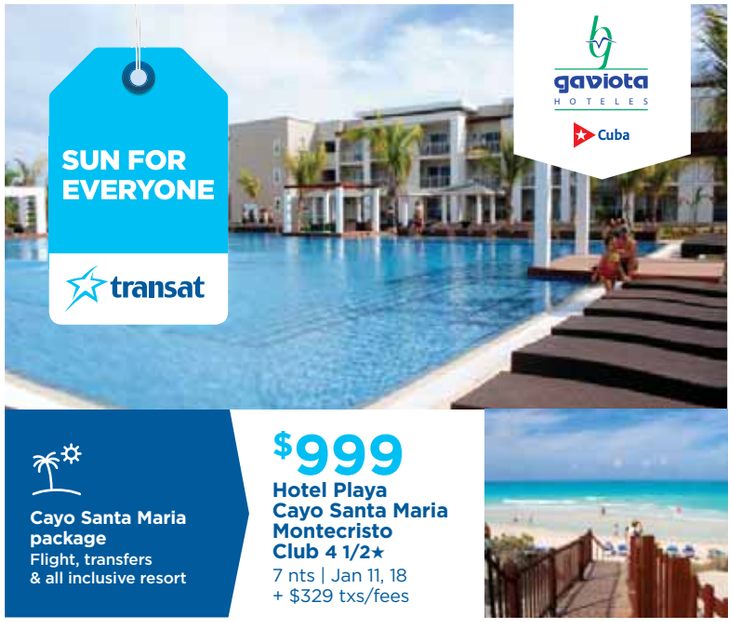
Be inspired by Chef Yotam Ottolenghi (Ottolenghi, Nopi), known for his vegetarian Mediterranean cuisine.

Head to one of the great produce markets. I love markets. You see what the locals are purchasing and how their day-to-day lives rotate around the market area.

Lima, Peru

A culinary tour is fabulous but a chocolate tour is even better, and there is a great focus on the origin of chocolate in Lima. A chocolate museum and numerous chocolate boutiques allow you to experience the nuances in the different flavours of chocolate.

On a side note, one restaurant not to miss is Central. It is considered one of the best restaurants in the world with a menu that focuses on tastes in four parts; mountain, sea, desert and jungle.



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TRAVEL NOTES GALAXY QUEST, SANTA'S ROOTS

Adventure sharing
Startup tour company Embark is a booking site with a difference: It's an adventure-sharing platform that lets you create, share and book adventures around the world with other like-minded adventurous people. The growing network of local guides is ready to take you skiing, hiking, ice climbing, camping, kayaking or fly fishing, person to person. Visit Embark.org.

The world is your oyster. STOCKSNAP

Space on Earth
You can actually visit the barren lands seen in Star Wars: Episode VII. Filmmakers chose the sand dunes of Abu Dhabi to shoot the desert scenes, in particular the Empty Quarter desert, which has the world's largest uninterrupted sand mass. Insight Vacations offers a four-day stopover in Dubai that includes a four-wheel drive trek into Abu Dhabi and its nearby sandy film set. Visit InsightVacations.com.

Episode VII stars the dunes of Abu Dhabi. CONTRIBUTED

Santa's hometown
While the folklore spans multiple cultures, the Turkish seaside town of Demre lays claim to being the birthplace of St. Nicholas in 270 AD. Unsurprisingly, he was known for his charity and secret gift-giving to the poor. Visitors to Demre can see frescoes depicting the saint's life and work in the Church of St. Nicholas, a solid example of Byzantine architecture. Visit GoTurkey.com. DOUG WALLACE

The Church of St. Nicholas in Demre, Turkey. CONTRIBUTED

MICHIGAN

Five reasons to visit Detroit right now

Melissa Dunne
For Metro Canada

Motor City makes its comeback

The Detroit waterfront as seen from Windsor, Ont. PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Back in 2013 everyone was talking about Detroit filing for the largest municipal bankruptcy in U.S. history. More than two years later the gritty city is undergoing a revitalization driven by a mix of bright-eyed, bushy-tailed hipsters and old-school, laid-back Detroiters. The Motor City is motoring along as it very slowly, but surely, rises from the ashes of bankruptcy with lots for Canadian tourists to see and do this winter.

1 Cheers!

Metro Detroit has a growing craft beer scene, with more than 30 brewpubs making Eater.com's list of where to drink in The D. One of the best places to try a bunch of local brews at once is the Grand Trunk Pub. The building in the heart of the city used to be a jewelry store when it first opened in 1879 and became a ticket office for the Grand Trunk Railway in 1910.

It's been a bar since 1935 and offers more than 170 bottle craft beers throughout the year. Opt for one of the many Michigan-brewed craft beers on tap, such as Bell's Brewery's Two Hearted Ale ($5.50 US for a pint).

2 It's (sort of) the New Brooklyn

The hometown of Ford's Model T is now home to places like Detroit Bikes and Shinola, whose Muhammad Ali Limited Edition Arrow bicycles start at $1,200 US. In certain areas there's been an influx of people who wear plaid shirts, thick glasses and rugged hiking boots whilst biking to an indie coffee shop (such as the admittedly excellent Astro Coffee) for a flat white.

While there have been several news stories seriously asking if it's the New Brooklyn, that's seriously a stretch. But, some hip neighbourhoods, like Corktown and Midtown, are quickly becoming gentrified, so best come see them now before they lose all of their original character.

3 Say Yes to Michigan!

Detroit is now out of bankruptcy, but is currently the poorest big city in America — with a shocking 39.3 per cent of the population living below the poverty line. Like the old tourism slogan that is now found on many a hipster T-shirt "Say Yes to Michigan!" by visiting and supporting the local economy.

The birthplace of Motown Records is also the birthplace of White Stripes frontman Jack White, who just opened an outpost of Third Man Records in the so-hip-it-hurts Cass Corridor neighbourhood. Make time to visit the Motown Museum, a.k.a. Hitsville U.S.A., for an exuberant tour looking back at Detroit's uplifting musical history.

There's always a wait list at Slows BBQ in Corktown.

4 A winter wonderland

Be warned, Detroit is called the Motor City for a reason: The public transportation is not up to snuff and you will need a car to get around. You'll be able to park your car in the core for a few dollars while you glide around on the skating rink at Campus Martius Park. The park area also features a twinkling Christmas tree and rink-side bar this time of year. You can then head up the I-96 to the scenic Ann Arbor, Mich., area where there are a bevy of nearby places to see rural Michigan via cross-country skis or snowshoes.

5 Foodie heaven

Detroit has a great (and growing) foodie scene. To get a real sense of all the local food and produce drive over to the Eastern Market, which runs year-round every Saturday from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. After checking out the sprawling market area, drive back to Corktown for dinner at Slows BBQ. The popular rib joint pretty much always has a waiting list of people waiting to dig into the finger-lickin' good ribs and fixins, such as mac-and-cheese, corn bread and beans. If you're looking for something more refined you only have to walk a few steps away for Gold Cash Gold, which has a rotating menu of seasonal foods likely for less gold cash gold than you'd anticipate.

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metro SPORTS

Cleveland Cavaliers guard Iman Shumpert calmly delivered his daughter when his fiancée unexpectedly went into labour in their bathroom

Canucks get Philly whipped, creamed

NHL

Vancouver now outscored 11-2 on road trip

Steve Mason made 36 saves and Michael Raffl and Sean Couturier each scored, leading the Philadelphia Flyers to a 2-0 win over the slumping Vancouver Canucks on Thursday night.

Mason, Philadelphia's No. 1 goalie who was making his first appearance since Dec. 8, returned to form and earned his first victory in his last eight home starts. Philadelphia has won seven of 10 overall.

The Canucks lost their eighth in 10 games, including the first three of a six-game road trip that continues Friday night at Detroit. Vancouver has been outscored 11-2 in the three road games.

Raffl's tally came on the power play with three minutes and 15 seconds left in the first period. Evgeny Medvedev took the initial shot and Raffl's tip got past Jacob Markstrom. However, the officials didn't stop play, thinking the puck hit off the crossbar. Play was halted 22 seconds later and replay officials determined that it was indeed a goal and ordered the arena horn be sounded.

The reverse situation happened just over five minutes into the second period when Claude Giroux's shot on a breakaway was ruled a goal by the on-ice officials, only to be overturned when replays showed it hit off the crossbar.

Couturier finished a rebound after Wayne Simmonds' shot went off the post with 2:50 remaining in the third period to put the game away.

Mason was pulled in his last outing after giving up three goals on 10 shots in a 4-3 overtime loss to the Islanders and watched from the bench as backup Michal Neuvirth started the last three contests.

But Mason was stout against the Canucks, making strong first-period saves on point-blank shots from Radim Vrbata, Chris Higgins and Daniel Sedin. Mason's best save was a highlight-reel glove stop while diving across the crease to deny Alexander Edler on a power-play chance with two minutes left in the second period.

Mason improved to 6-8-4 while earning his second shutout of the season and 28th of his career. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Flyers' Sean Couturier, right, celebrates after scoring a goal against Canucks goalie Jacob Markstrom on Thursday in Philadelphia. MATT SLOCUM/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In Philadelphia

2	0
FLYERS	CANUCKS

CFL

Lions re-sign receiver Arceneaux

Cam Tucker
Metro | Vancouver

Emmanuel Arceneaux seemed to be at his most dangerous this past season when Jonathon Jennings took over the starting quarterback role in mid-September.

Together, they formed an instant chemistry, highlighted during a two-game stretch in early October when Arceneaux had a combined 288 yards receiving and four touchdowns, helping to ignite both The Manny Show and the Lions offence.

1,151

The amount of receiving yards Arceneaux compiled in 2015.

The duo of Arceneaux and Jennings should have the chance to regain that form when training camp begins next June.

On Thursday, the Lions signed Arceneaux to a contract that keeps him in B.C. through 2017. The 28-year-old receiver, who finished fourth in the Canadian Football League in receiving yards with 1,151, was set to become a free agent in February. He also hit a single-season career high in touchdowns with nine.

"I think there might've been a four or five-game stretch where he might've been the most dominating receiver in the league," Lions head coach and general manager Wally Buono told Metro in a phone interview.

"It's always like they say: Is it the chicken or the egg? Is it the egg or the chicken? But at the end of it, a quarterback allows big-play guys to make big plays. Jonathon had a chemistry, had a confidence — whatever you want to call it, he wasn't afraid to use Manny, wasn't afraid to throw him the football."

Emmanuel Arceneaux signed a contract to stay with the B.C. Lions through 2017. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

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McCann juniors call imminent

CANUCKS

Henrik Sedin injury could mean young centre stays put

Cam Tucker
Metro | Vancouver

The time for the Vancouver Canucks to make a decision on Jared McCann is here, although due to circumstances from Thursday's game against the Philadelphia Flyers, it may have already been made.

The Canucks have until Saturday, when the NHL's holiday roster freeze goes into effect, to either keep McCann with the big club or release him to the World Junior Championship to play for Team Canada, as it looks to successfully defend its gold medal title.

The 19-year-old McCann, one of Vancouver's two first-round selections in the 2014 draft, is in his rookie season with the Canucks, playing the demanding position of centre. Prior to Thursday's meeting with the Flyers, he had scored six goals and nine points in 30 games, but had been held off the score sheet for nine straight games.

Jared McCann has six goals and 9 points in 30 games this season. SEAN M. HAFFEY/GETTY IMAGES

"I think he's been good for us. I think we will, at some point, you will look at all the options and what we think is the best for his development. That's always been the key," coach Willie Desjardins told TSN 1040.

"Since that's (the World Juniors) available, we'd be remiss not to take a look at it and to see if we think that can help him in some form."

In fairness, goal production for the Canucks has slowed drastically beyond the top line of Daniel and Henrik Sedin and Jannik Hansen. The Canucks have also fallen to the injury bug up the middle of the ice.

First, it was Brandon Sutter, who had sports hernia surgery at the beginning of this month and was expected to miss four to six weeks.

On Thursday, Henrik Sedin, Vancouver's captain and No. 1 centre, left the game with what was reported to be a lower-body injury and did not return.

That spells trouble for the Canucks. It also likely means that if Henrik is out for any prolonged period of time, then the Canucks might not have another option but to keep McCann.

> **Since that's (the World Juniors) available, we'd be remiss not to take a look at it and see if we think that can help him.**
>
> Canucks coach Willie Desjardins on whether to let Jared McCann leave

In the event of a Henrik Sedin injury, the Canucks would also have to make a call to the Utica Comets to bring up someone — Linden Vey, who the Canucks waived at the start of the season, is an option — to play in the middle.

The Canucks have already released fellow 19-year-old rookie Jake Virtanen to the World Juniors.

NHL IN BRIEF

Kings prove too Quick for scoreless Canadiens

Jonathan Quick made a season-high 45 saves as the Los Angeles Kings shut out the Montreal Canadiens 3-0 on Thursday night.

The shutout was Quick's second of the season. Anze Kopitar, Drew Doughty and Marian Gaborik, in an empty net, scored for the Kings (20-9-2). Mike Condon has now lost his last four starts for Montreal (20-10-3). THE CANADIAN PRESS

Crawford shuts out Oilers in four-star Hawks display

Corey Crawford made 33 saves in his NHL-best fifth shutout, Teuvo Teravainen had two goals and an assist, and the Chicago Blackhawks beat the Edmonton Oilers 4-0 on Thursday night.

Jonathan Toews added a goal and two assists in a strong performance by Chicago's top line. Marian Hossa had three assists as the Blackhawks won for the third time in four games.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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metro

Recycle Your Christmas Tree

After the holiday season, recycle your live, cut Christmas tree. Remove all the decorations and tinsel from the tree and use one of the following options:

Lions Club Chipping Events:

Saturday, January 9 and Sunday, January 10 from 10am to 4pm at these locations:

- **Kerrisdale Community Ice Rink parking lot** 5670 East Boulevard north of 41st Avenue
- **Kitsilano Beach parking lot** Cornwall Avenue and Arbutus Street
- **Sunset Beach upper parking lot** Beach Avenue and Broughton Street
- **Rona Home & Garden Grandview Store** 2727 East 12th Avenue – overflow parking lot north of Grandview Highway, south of 12th Avenue

Donations of cash and non-perishable food items will be accepted and distributed to local charities.

Residential Collection:

Christmas trees will be collected the weekend of January 16-17. Set out your tree before 7 am on January 16 for collection. Trees should be set out on their own and laid on their sides. Do not place your tree inside your Green Bin or bag or bundle it.

Drop-Off Depots:

You may drop off your tree at no charge until January 31 at the Vancouver South Transfer Station, 377 Kent Avenue North, or Vancouver Landfill, 5400 72nd Street, Delta.

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Giants bear down on goal for charity

WHL

Players hope for plush shower with Silvertips heading to town

Cam Tucker
Metro | Vancouver

'Tis the season for the annual teddy bear toss — a growing tradition in junior and minor pro rinks during the holiday season.

Recently, fans attending a Calgary Hitmen game tossed more than 28,800 teddy bears onto the ice at Scotiabank Saddledome.

On Friday, the Vancouver Giants hold their own teddy bear toss night when they host the Everett Silvertips at the Pacific Coliseum. When the Giants score their first goal, that's the fans' cue to throw those stuffies onto the ice.

Vancouver Giants help pick up stuffed animals during a previous teddy bear toss night at Pacific Coliseum.
CJ RELKE/VANCOUVER GIANTS

All teddy bears will be donated to the Lower Mainland Christmas Bureau. The Giants are expecting a crowd of more than 8,000 fans.

"We usually get a really big crowd, which is nice," said 20-year-old forward Carter Popoff in a phone interview. "It seems like the teddy bears never stop."

Popoff, from Richmond, joined the Giants in February of 2012. He has fond memories of past teddy bear toss nights — being on the ice at the exact moment thousands of plush toys shower down from the seats.

"Once you're out there and you're celebrating with the guys, you turn around and the ice is just covered in bears and you're trying to find a way off the ice," said Popoff.

"It's a really cool experience."

The Giants have won six of their last nine games.

They're last in the Western Conference, but have inched to within four points of the final wild-card spot.

So that first goal will be double important Friday night.

"Right when it happens ... you look and see so many young kids and less fortunate kids are going to have a stuffed animal they can cherish and it's all because of a hockey game," said Popoff.

"When you look at it in the bigger picture, it's really a lot bigger than just the game.

"It's about our entire community."

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Buchanan Canadian player of the year

Kadeisha Buchanan had yet to reach double digits in age when Christine Sinclair started her run of 11 straight Canadian female player of the year awards in 2004.

Sinclair, who also won the award in 2000, is still the captain of the Canadian women's soccer team. But the 32-year-old's stranglehold on the top player award ended Thursday when Buchanan was voted BMO Player of the Year.

"It's definitely quite a shock because obviously Christine has won it so many times," the 20-year-old defender who put her stamp on the world stage at the 2015 Women's World Cup, said.

Kadeisha Buchanan
GETTY IMAGES

"It's a bit of change to get used to. Like wow.... It's obviously a great honour," she added.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

SOCCER IN BRIEF

Chelsea sacks Mourinho
Jose Mourinho's second tenure as Chelsea manager abruptly ended on Thursday with the team languishing just above the relegation zone only seven months after winning the Premier League.

Mourinho's dismissal comes four months into a new four-year contract.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Suarez treble puts Barca into Club World Cup final
Luis Suarez made up for the absence of Lionel Messi and Neymar, scoring a hat trick Thursday as Barcelona beat Guangzhou Evergrande 3-0 to advance to the final of the Club World Cup in Yokohama, Japan.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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RECIPE Mexican Egg Bake

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

A zesty tomato sauce punctuated with avocado and cilantro is the perfect bed for runny, baked eggs.

Ready in
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 20 minutes
Serves 4

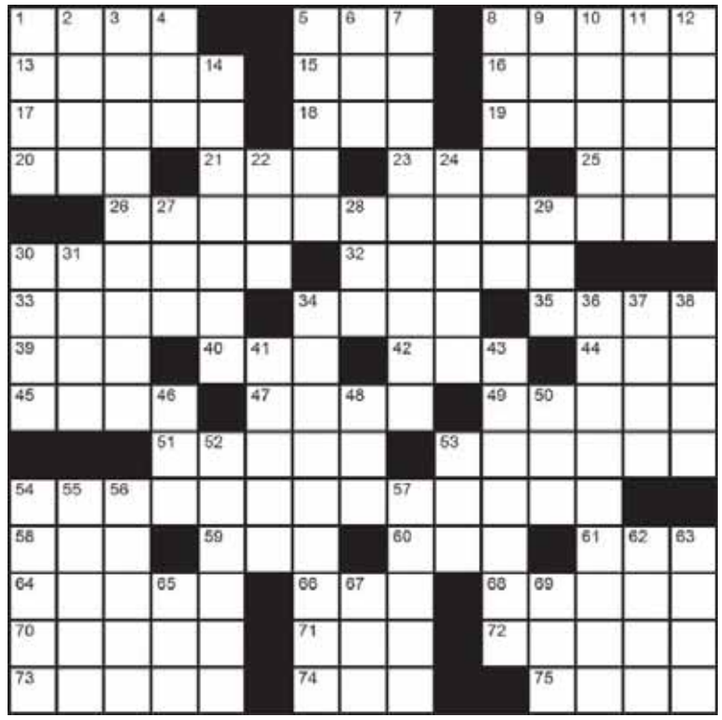
Ingredients
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp chili powder
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1/2 tsp red pepper or cayenne
- 1 x 28 oz can tomatoes
- 1 x 14 oz can black beans, rinsed
- 5 eggs
- Small handful of cilantro, chopped
- 1/2 avocado, sliced
- 1/2 cup cheddar, grated
- 1/2 cup Greek yogurt

Directions
1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
2. In a medium-sized skillet, warm olive oil and sauté the onion and garlic until they begin to soften. Add spices and stir; cook 2 minutes. Add tomatoes and black beans. Use the back of a wooden spoon to break up tomatoes. Simmer for about 15 or 20 minutes until sauce has thickened.
3. Gently crack the eggs on top of the sauce. Place skillet in the oven for 8 to 10 minutes, or until egg whites are cooked but yolks are runny.
4. Remove pan from oven and allow to cool a bit before placing on a trivet on the table. Scoop each serving gently, being sure to get an egg and a good amount of the bean sauce. Place extras — avocado, yogurt, cheese and cilantro — on table so everyone can DIY toppings.

FOR MORE MEAL IDEAS, VISIT SWEETPOTATOCHRONICLES.COM

CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Math instrument [abbr.]
5. Illuminated
8. 5th Dimension member Marilyn
13. Tropical greeting
15. Iron __
16. Green spaces for homes
17. Particular parrot
18. Nourished
19. Fix that squeak once more
20. Pitcher's stat.
21. Boat's stern
23. Nero's 511
25. Key: French
26. Character in #14-Down: 2 wds.
30. Fashion designer Ms. Johnson
32. Tolerate
33. Bird-like
34. "Tres _!"
35. High-five-to-high-five hit
39. Sleep state, commonly
40. Cardinals player's baseball cap letters
42. Actor's representative [abbr.]
44. Diminutive suffix
45. Was aware
47. Remorseful person
49. Britannica, e.g.
51. Not __ (Not so far)
53. Crowd reactions to corny jokes
54. Villains-in-white-armour in #14-Down
58. Left tap's meaning
59. Haunted house hooowl!
60. Feminine suffix
61. Lobster __ Diavolo (Seafood dish with pasta)
64. Book's beginning, briefly
66. "__ Have to Say the Words?" by Bryan Adams
68. Science fiction being
70. Clay pigeon shooting
71. 'Ether' suffix
72. It's often served with tongs
73. Abrasive
74. Sanctions, short-style
75. Gladiator's 951

DOWN
1. Arrived (b.1849 - d.1919)
2. Banned orchard spray
3. When a TV show airs regionally: 2 wds.
4. Repeated-word dance
5. Former factory living spaces
6. Wrath
7. Classic toy from Santa: 2 wds.
8. Immeasurable
9. Flight simulators co. headquartered in Saint-Laurent, QC
10. __-Pot (Slow cooker)
11. Wearer of the black tutu in Swan Lake
12. Canadian doctor, the 'Father of Modern Medicine', William __
14. "Star Wars: The Force __" (2015)
22. Tina of "Sisters" (2015)
24. Type of fighter craft in #14-Down, _-__
27. ___ Today (American newspaper)
28. Trombonist Mr. Winding
29. __ Miserables
30. Tree trunk topping
31. All square
34. Canadian band that formed in 1984: 2 wds.
36. Production company behind #14-Down
37. Kirk __, "Superman" (1948) star
38. Bench press muscles, commonly
41. __ __ understand (Attempt at comprehending)
43. Nobel-winning Mother, and namesakes
46. Combat reason
48. Ike's WWII arena
50. Scand. land
52. Not lumpy or bumpy
53. Car's navigation aid, commonly
54. __ kebab
55. Toy truck brand
56. Furry mammal that can swim
57. Trompe l'__ (Visual illusions)
62. Authentic
63. "The King __ _" (1956)
65. Home addr.
67. Tree of acorns
69. Lake: French

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
If you haven't done anything marvellous yet don't worry because there is still time — just. Make your move this weekend, certainly before the Sun changes signs on the 22nd.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
Changes are coming, changes that will enable you to move in a new, exciting direction when the Sun moves in your favour early next week. Do only what your heart tells you to.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Geminis are supposed to be daring. Geminis are supposed to take risks. So what happened? Life is meant to be a great adventure. Make today the day when you rediscover your true nature again.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
When the Sun moves into your opposite sign of Capricorn in a few days you'll be at the halfway point of your solar year. It's a good time to take stock of how far you've come.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
This is no time to slow down. There is a lot to be done before the Sun leaves the most dynamic area of your chart on the 2nd. Creatively, and romantically, there is no limit to what you can accomplish.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Don't waste time and energy on senseless disputes with people you don't respect. Focus on more important matters between now and when the Sun changes signs next Tuesday.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Your present course is taking you in the wrong direction and you're missing opportunities simply because you're too stubborn to admit it. There's still time to get back on track.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Stand up for your rights and don't let anyone tell you what you can and cannot do. What others don't seem to understand is that you cannot be bribed or pressured to go against your principles. Flattery, of course, is harder to defend against.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
The Sun remains in your sign a few more days, so make the most of it. Take every opportunity that comes your way and today can be special.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Recent weeks have been far from easy and there will be more challenges to come over the next few days. However, come Tuesday, when the Sun moves into your sign, things will start to get better in a big way.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Steer clear of other people's fights and feuds — there is nothing you can gain from them. If you stick your nose in where it is not wanted you're inviting someone to take a poke at it!

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
Once again you're allowing yourself to be dragged into situations that are not good for you. Make an effort to put distance between you and those who would use you.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

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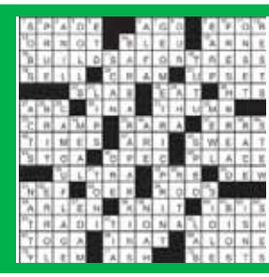

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